LA Phil

GUSTAVO DUDAMEL
MUSIC & ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

FEBRUARY 3–MARCH 8, 2026

2025/26 SEASON

WALT DISNEY CONCERT HALL

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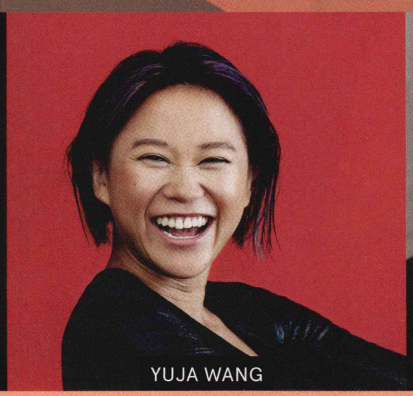
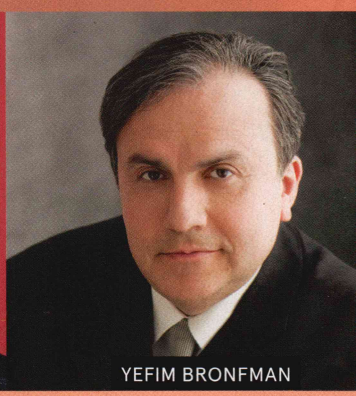

YUJA WANG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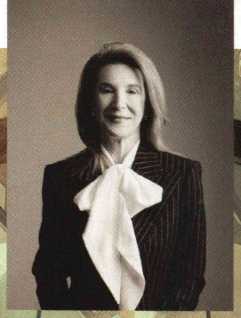

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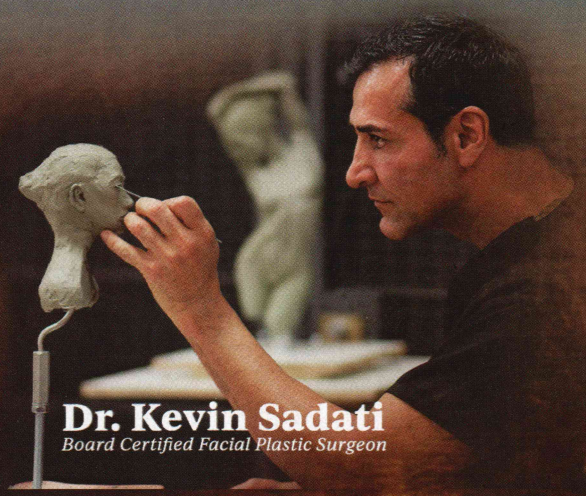

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WELCOME

Art has the magical ability to transport us across time. Through this unique quality, great thinkers from the 1700s can connect and influence contemporary voices, Hollywood's Golden Age figures still tug at our heartstrings, and Los Angeles' founding figures can inspire future generations.

Beethoven thought that music could change our communities and ourselves for the better, and two centuries later this belief also drives Music & Artistic Director Gustavo Dudamel. Over four weeks, Gustavo leads an exploration of Beethoven's work, from the revolutionary spirit of *Egmont* to the profound statement of faith in *Missa Solemnis*, which he is conducting for the first time! He'll be joined by some of today's greatest artists, including Jeremy O. Harris, Cate Blanchett, Ricardo Lorenz, Gabriela Ortiz, and Thomas Adès.

We see cross-generational exchanges in Seth MacFarlane's evening devoted to Frank Sinatra (Feb. 17), Yuja Wang's interpretation of Prokofiev's Piano Concerto No. 2 (Feb. 6–8), and the John Adams–curated Green Umbrella program, featuring pieces by rising composers such as his son, Samuel Adams (Feb. 3).

And history will come alive on March 7, as Gustavo conducts the world premiere of *The Great Wall of Los Angeles*. This symphonic tribute, as well as Judy Baca's powerful mural on which it's based, gives voice to the Angelenos who created this city with an eye toward better days ahead. It is an impressively ambitious project, and I hope to see you there.

Warmly,

Kim Noltemy
President & Chief Executive Officer
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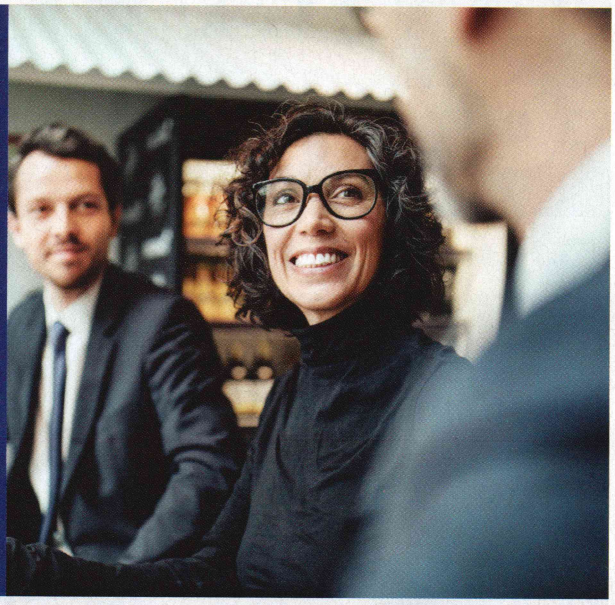

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GUSTAVO DUDAMEL

Music & Artistic Director, *Walt and Lilly Disney Chair*

Gustavo Dudamel is committed to creating a better world through music. Guided by an unwavering belief in the power of art to inspire and transform lives, he has worked tirelessly to expand education and access for underserved communities around the world and to broaden the impact of classical music on new and ever-larger audiences. His rise, from humble beginnings as a child in Venezuela to an unparalleled career of artistic and social achievements, offers living proof that culture can bring meaning to the life of an individual and greater harmony to the world at large. He currently serves as the Music & Artistic Director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic and the Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra of Venezuela, and in 2026, he becomes the Music and Artistic Director of the New York Philharmonic, continuing a legacy that includes Gustav Mahler, Arturo Toscanini, and Leonard Bernstein. Throughout 2025, Dudamel celebrated the 50th Anniversary of El Sistema, honoring the global impact of José Antonio Abreu's visionary education program across five generations and acknowledging the vital importance of arts education.

Dudamel's advocacy for the power of music to unite, heal, and inspire is global in scope. In appearances from the United Nations to the White House to the Nobel Peace Prize Concert, Dudamel has served as a passionate advocate for music education and social integration through art, sharing his own transformative experience in Venezuela's El Sistema program as an example of how music can give a sense of purpose and meaning to young people and help them rise above challenging circumstances. In 2007, Dudamel, the LA Phil, and its community partners founded YOLA (Youth Orchestra Los Angeles), which now provides more than 1,700 young people with free instruments, intensive music instruction, academic support, and leadership training. In 2012, Dudamel launched the Dudamel Foundation, which he co-chairs with his wife, actress and director María Valverde, with the goal of expanding access to music and the arts for young people by providing tools and opportunities to shape their creative futures.

As a conductor, Dudamel is one of the few classical musicians to become a bona fide pop-culture phenomenon and has worked tirelessly to ensure that music reaches an ever-greater audience. He was the first classical artist to participate in the Super Bowl halftime show and the youngest conductor ever to lead the Vienna Philharmonic's New Year's Concert. He has performed at global mainstream events from the Academy Awards to Coachella, and has worked with musical icons like Billie Eilish, Christina Aguilera, LL Cool J, Ca7riel & Paco Amoroso, Laufey, Coldplay, and Nas. Dudamel conducted the score to Steven Spielberg's new adaptation of *West Side Story*, and at John Williams' personal request, he guest conducted the opening and closing credits of *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*. His film and television appearances include *Sesame Street*, *The Simpsons*, *Mozart in the Jungle*, *Trolls World Tour*, and *The Nutcracker and the Four Realms*, and in 2019 Dudamel was honored with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

For more information about Gustavo Dudamel, visit his official website at **gustavodudamel.com** and the Dudamel Foundation at **dudamelfoundation.org**.

LOS ANGELES PHILHARMONIC

The Los Angeles Philharmonic, under the vibrant leadership of Music & Artistic Director Gustavo Dudamel, presents an inspiring array of music through a commitment to foundational works and adventurous explorations. Both at home and abroad, the LA Phil—recognized as one of the world's outstanding orchestras—is leading the way in groundbreaking and diverse programming, onstage and in the community, that reflects the orchestra's artistry and demonstrates its vision. The 2025/26 season is the orchestra's 107th.

Nearly 300 concerts are either performed or presented by the LA Phil at its three iconic venues: the Frank Gehry-designed Walt Disney Concert Hall, the Hollywood Bowl, and The Ford. During its winter season at Walt Disney Concert Hall, with approximately 165 performances, the LA Phil creates festivals, artist residencies, and other thematic programs designed to enhance the audience's experience of orchestral music. Since 1922, its summer home has been the world-famous Hollywood Bowl, host to the finest artists from all genres of music. The Ford, situated in a 32-acre park and under the stewardship of the LA Phil since December 2019, presents an eclectic summer season of music, dance, film, and family events that are reflective of the communities that comprise Los Angeles.

The orchestra's involvement with Los Angeles extends far beyond its venues. Among its influential and multifaceted learning initiatives is YOLA (Youth Orchestra Los Angeles). Through YOLA, inspired by Gustavo Dudamel's own training as a young musician, the LA Phil and its community partners provide free instruments, intensive music training, and academic support to over 1,700 young musicians, empowering them to become vital citizens, leaders, and agents of change. In the fall of 2021, YOLA opened its own permanent, purpose-built facility: the Judith and Thomas L. Beckmen YOLA Center at Inglewood, designed by Frank Gehry.

The orchestra also undertakes tours, both domestically and internationally, including regular visits to New York, London (where the orchestra is the Barbican Centre's International Orchestral Partner), Paris, and Tokyo. As part of its global Centennial activities, the orchestra visited Seoul, Tokyo, Mexico City, London, Boston, and New York. The LA Phil's first tour was in 1921, and the orchestra has made annual tours since the 1969/70 season.

The LA Phil has released an array of critically acclaimed recordings, including world premieres of the music of John Adams and Louis Andriessen, along with Grammy-winning recordings featuring the music of Brahms, Ives, Andrew Norman, Thomas Adès, and Gabriela Ortiz—whose *Revolución diamantina* received three Grammys in 2025.

The Los Angeles Philharmonic was founded in 1919 by William Andrews Clark, Jr., a wealthy amateur musician. Walter Henry Rothwell became its first Music Director, serving until 1927; since then, 10 renowned conductors have served in that capacity: Georg Schnéevoigt (1927-1929), Artur Rodziński (1929-1933), Otto Klemperer (1933-1939), Alfred Wallenstein (1943-1956), Eduard van Beinum (1956-1959), Zubin Mehta (1962-1978), Carlo Maria Giulini (1978-1984), André Previn (1985-1989), Esa-Pekka Salonen (1992-2009), and Gustavo Dudamel (2009-present).

LOS ANGELES PHILHARMONIC

Gustavo Dudamel
Music & Artistic Director
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Ann Ronus Chair

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FIRST VIOLINS

[Position vacant]
Concertmaster
Marjorie Connell Wilson Chair

Bing Wang
Acting Concertmaster
Barbara and Jay Rasulo Chair

[Position vacant]
First Associate Concertmaster
Ernest Fleischmann Chair

[Position vacant]
Assistant Concertmaster
Philharmonic Affiliates Chair

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Deanie and Jay Stein Chair

Justin Woo

Minyoung Chang
I.H. Albert Sutnick Chair

Tianyun Jia
Jordan Koransky
Ashley Park
Katherine Woo
Weilu Zhang

SECOND VIOLINS

Melody Ye Yuan
Principal

Mark Kashper
Associate Principal

Isabella Brown
Assistant Principal

Kristine Whitson
Johnny Lee
Ingrid Chun
Jin-Shan Dai
Miika Gregg
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[Position vacant]
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Sarah Jackson

Piccolo
Sarah Jackson

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Marion Arthur Kuszyk
Associate Principal

Anne Marie Gabriele

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Michele and Dudley Rauch Chair

[Position vacant]
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Andrew Lowy
Taylor Eiffert

E-Flat Clarinet
Andrew Lowy

Bass Clarinet
Taylor Eiffert

BASSOONS

Whitney Crockett
Principal

[Position vacant]
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Evan Kuhlmann
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The Los Angeles Philharmonic string section utilizes revolving seating on a systematic basis. Players listed alphabetically change seats periodically.

The musicians of the Los Angeles Philharmonic are represented by Professional Musicians Local 47, AFM.

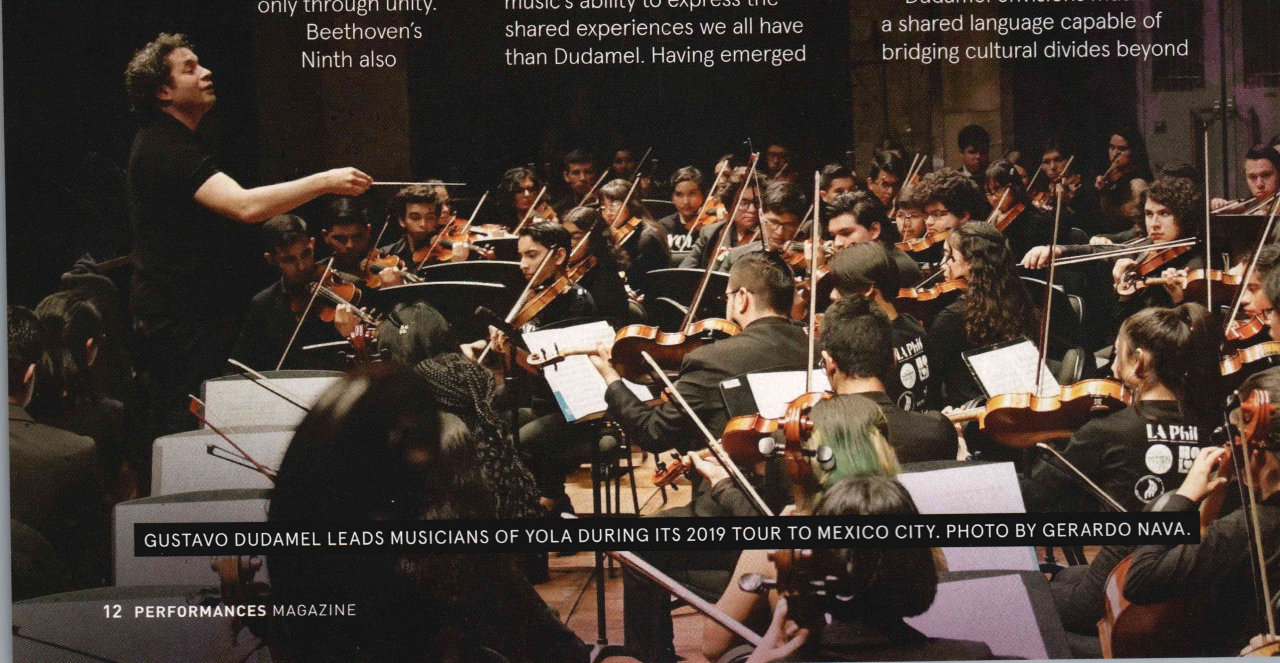
A FORCE FOR UNITY

Beethoven's belief in music's ability to bridge cultural divides and foster connection runs through the legacy of Music & Artistic Director Gustavo Dudamel. By Liliana Morales

Music has long been one of humanity's greatest tools for unity. Across cultures and political divides, music has overcome language barriers and served as a source of inspiration, resistance, and connection. It has the ability to express what words cannot and to remind people that their existence serves something larger than themselves. At the turn of the 19th century amid profound political and social upheaval throughout Europe, Ludwig van Beethoven used music not only as entertainment, but also as a vehicle to advance ideals of shared humanity and communal strength in works such as his Ninth Symphony, which features Friedrich Schiller's poem "Ode to Joy." The symphony asks the audience to listen and picture themselves not as followers of a specific creed, but solely as human beings. It expresses the universality of struggle and the possibility of triumph that emerges only through unity. Beethoven's Ninth also provides the most vivid example I have of music acting as a uniting force while playing alongside my peers. On October 3, 2009, to celebrate the appointment of Gustavo Dudamel as Music Director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, I was onstage at the Hollywood Bowl as part of YOLA (Youth Orchestra Los Angeles) performing "Ode to Joy" at the *¡Bienvenido Gustavo!* concert. At the age of 8, I did not recognize the significance of the moment, but I did understand the feeling of playing with my friends, performing a piece we had worked tirelessly to prepare. In that moment, it was not the size of the audience that mattered, but the pride we felt in sharing this meaningful experience with one another.

In the centuries between Beethoven's time and my debut at the Bowl, music has been a driving force in promoting connection during divisive times. There is perhaps no better exemplar of music's ability to express the shared experiences we all have than Dudamel. Having emerged from El Sistema, a Venezuelan program that provides children access to classical music, he has always viewed music and social responsibility as inherently intertwined. El Sistema's founder, José Antonio Abreu, viewed music as a basic human right and orchestras not as elite institutions but places to build community, discipline, and hope. Dudamel's career has been a living testament to this philosophy, with influence that extends far beyond the stage. In 2007 he and the LA Phil founded YOLA, an El Sistema-based program through which thousands of young musicians across Los Angeles have been provided free instruments, professional instruction, and opportunities to perform on world-renowned stages. He demonstrates that unity is not to be viewed in the abstract, but as something that must be intentionally built through inclusion and opportunity, when people are given the tools to participate.

Dudamel envisions music as a shared language capable of bridging cultural divides beyond



GUSTAVO DUDAMEL LEADS MUSICIANS OF YOLA DURING ITS 2019 TOUR TO MEXICO CITY. PHOTO BY GERARDO NAVA.

the limits of language through rooted collective intention. His dedication to arts education reflects the belief that unity begins with providing people the tools to engage meaningfully with one another. Just as music joins the distinct sounds of each musician into a cohesive whole, it has the capacity to connect people through a shared purpose built on harmony. In a world grappling with polarization and inequality, the legacy of Beethoven and Dudamel remains profoundly relevant. Music's greatest power lies not only in individual technical mastery, but also in the beauty that comes from bringing a symphony together.

Gustavo Dudamel made his debut with the LA Phil in 2005 at the age of 24, and now at 24 myself, I look back on my experience with new appreciation. The 2009 concert and the following 16 years I have known Dudamel continue to shape the way I view the world. Our parallel timelines now feel especially significant. At 8 years old I saw Dudamel as someone far removed from me. During the rehearsals leading up to the *¡Bienvenido Gustavo!* concert, there was undeniable energy in the room—news cameras, journalists, and an atmosphere almost bordering on frenzy. Yet the moment Dudamel raised his baton, everything stilled. There was silence. He spoke to us in a way that made us feel capable, treating us as professional musicians, not children. His unwavering belief in our abilities became the foundation of our newfound confidence. Looking back, I recognize how young Dudamel was when he stood before us leading YOLA with clarity and conviction. This realization has reframed how I think about my own life. Dudamel did not wait for permission or certainty before becoming an agent of change; he stepped into the role with assurance, and taught me that impact is determined not by age or status, but by conviction in one's beliefs and abilities.

Dudamel's vision of music as a force for unity did not just shape the sound that evening in 2009; it shaped how I saw myself in relation to others. Touring with YOLA and meeting young musicians from around the world, sharing music even when we did not share a language, taught me to see myself as a member of a global community. One of my fondest memories of YOLA was returning as an alumna to join its 2019 tour to Mexico, celebrating the 50th anniversary of Los Angeles and Mexico City as sister cities. Witnessing the younger students' excitement as we explored a new city and performed on the national stage at the Palacio de Bellas Artes reminded me of the joy I felt as a student myself. The friendships I formed through YOLA remain some of my strongest and most cherished. Coming together each week over the course of a decade, building, creating, and growing alongside my friends, left a lasting imprint. Through YOLA, I learned what it meant to be a part of something greater than myself and came to understand that it is necessary to be engaged in our communities to cultivate spaces of shared belonging that inspire us to push our limits.

When I think back to being on that stage at 8 years old, I no longer picture a child performing. I see the beginning of a perspective and transformation that has continued to resonate long after the final notes were played.

Liliana Morales, a YOLA alumna and YOLA National Institute fellow, has performed at Walt Disney Concert Hall and the Hollywood Bowl and toured internationally with the Los Angeles Philharmonic. A UCSD graduate, she founded an El Sistema-inspired organization in her hometown of La Habra that blends her passions for music, science, and community service.

"OLYMPIC CHAMPIONS BREAKING BARRIERS 1964-1984," JUDITH F. BACA © 1983

A BRIDGE BETWEEN MURAL AND MUSIC

Muralist Judy Baca has spent her career creating public art that tells the stories of communities too often left out of the historical record. By Derek Traub

Through SPARC—the Social and Public Art Resource Center—Judy Baca has helped shape Los Angeles' cultural landscape for nearly five decades. Her gallery production space at Bergamot Station in Santa Monica serves as the creative headquarters for the expansion of *The Great Wall of Los Angeles*, one of the most ambitious and influential public art projects nationwide.

Standing in that space—surrounded by preparatory drawings, historical research, and the scale models that bring *The Great Wall* to life—we spoke with Baca about her upcoming collaboration with the LA Phil and the LA Phil's own untold history: The orchestra's founders included a gay man living as openly as the era allowed, Jewish artists fleeing Europe, and socialists who believed deeply in the democratization of great music.

"Those sound like our kind of people!" Baca said with a grin.

That shared ethos comes to life in *The Great Wall of Los Angeles*, a new symphony commissioned by the LA Phil and presented in collaboration with SPARC, premiering March 7 under the baton of Music & Artistic Director Gustavo Dudamel.

Launched in 1974 with the participation to date of more than 400 young people from neighborhoods across Los Angeles, *The Great Wall of Los Angeles* is not simply a mural—it is a public monument, a civic history lesson, and a reclamation of stories erased by time and concrete. Painted directly along the channel walls of the Los Angeles River, the work currently chronicles the region's history from prehistoric times through the 1950s "as seen through the eyes of women and minorities."

Baca calls the artwork "a tattoo on the scar where the river once ran," a direct reference to the US Army Corps of Engineers' concreting of the river in the 1930s. But the metaphor extends further: If a river can be disappeared, so can the stories of the people who lived along its banks.

Like Baca's landmark half-mile mural running through the Tujunga Wash, the symphonic project—led by Dudamel and composer-curator Gabriela Ortiz—seeks to tell a fuller history of Los Angeles and the people who built it, especially those omitted from official narratives. In paint or in sound, the work is ultimately about who gets remembered.

The next phase of the mural—spanning an additional 2,740 feet and depicting up to the 21st century—is underway, with plans to complete it in time for the 2028 Olympic Games. Young artists are being trained as the next generation of muralists, continuing the intergenerational, community-built ethos that defined the original work.

Dudamel, whose tenure as Music & Artistic Director of the LA Phil concludes after this season, has described Los Angeles as "the city that raised me as an artist." In that spirit, *The Great Wall of Los Angeles* event is both an homage and a tribute to Dudamel's legacy. The concert features six works

JUDITH F. BACA, IMAGE COURTESY OF ISA MORENO/SPARC.

"DIVISION OF THE BARRIOS & CHAVEZ RAVINE," JUDITH F. BACA © 1983

inspired by the mural and penned by composers with a connection to Southern California's richly diverse history: Juhi Bansal, Nicolás Lell Benavides, Viet Cuong, Xavier Muzik, Estevan Olmos, and Nina Shekhar. The evening also presents an accompanying film by Oscar-winning director Alejandro G. Iñárritu.

Each composer focuses on a different section of the mural or the historical narrative behind it, drawing from stories that span centuries of life in California and Los Angeles.

These include the Lone Woman of San Nicolas Island, whose solitary survival speaks to the erasure of Indigenous communities; the Mexican Repatriation of the 1930s, when hundreds of thousands—possibly as many as 2 million—people of Mexican descent were forcibly removed from the US; and moments of queer activism, including the founding in Los Angeles of the Mattachine Society, one of the nation's earliest gay rights organizations.

The result is not a retelling of history but a refracting of it: a collection of personal, cultural, and sonic responses that merge into a shared civic memory.

Dudamel likens the symphonic project to Baca's collaborative method: many small strokes, different hands, one collective story.

Though their tools differ—brushes and scaffolding versus bows and brass—SPARC and the LA Phil share core values: empowering young people, uplifting community histories, and affirming that art and music belong to the public.

While the symphonic work, *The Great Wall of Los Angeles*, premieres in March at Walt Disney Concert Hall, the mural continues to expand just miles away. Both works remind us that Los Angeles is a city still being written—and that its history is strongest when many hands hold the pen.

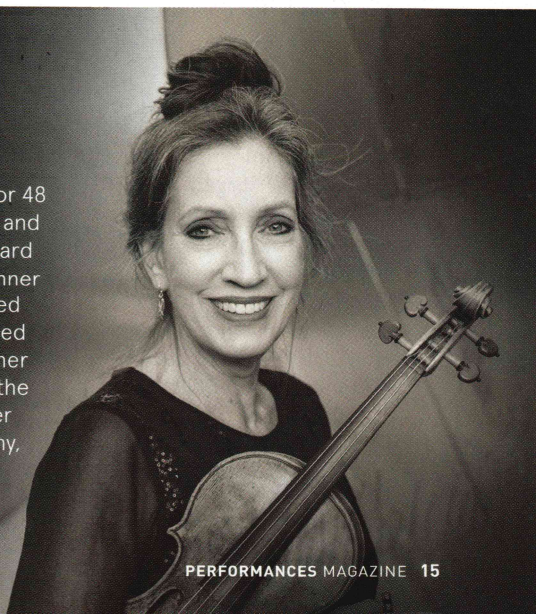
IMAGES: JUDITH F. BACA © 1983, DETAILS FROM *THE GREAT WALL OF LOS ANGELES* MURAL. COURTESY OF THE SPARC ARCHIVES, SPARCINLA.ORG.

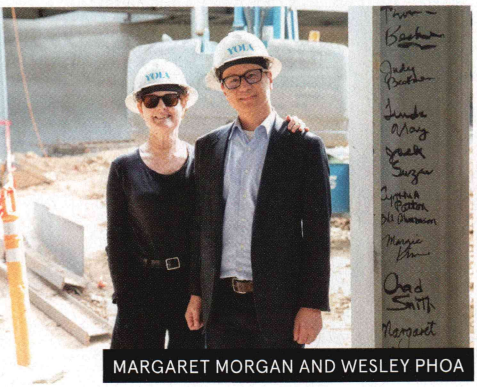
Scan to learn more about *The Great Wall of Los Angeles* and how to support the project or visit **sparcinla.org** for more information.

IN LOVING MEMORY

Rochelle Abramson 1953–2025

As a member of the Los Angeles Philharmonic's first violin section for 48 years, Rochelle Abramson demonstrated an unwavering dedication and passion for both the LA Phil and the violin. A graduate of The Juilliard School, she made her Carnegie Hall recital debut in April 1977 as winner of the Artists International Auditions. *The New York Times* remarked in its review that she showed "flashes of brilliance." Abramson joined the LA Phil the following year, in 1978, but she continued to share her joy of music widely, playing at events and with ensembles including the Long Beach Bach Festival, the Peninsula Symphony's annual Summer Concerts, the Carson Symphony, the San Juan Capistrano Symphony, and L.A. Valley College Symphony. She also performed frequently in chamber concerts throughout Los Angeles.





MARGARET MORGAN AND WESLEY PHOA

CURATING TOMORROW'S MOMENTS TODAY

Margaret Morgan and Wesley Phoa

At their cores, Margaret Morgan and Wesley Phoa believe music is a basic human right.

A visual artist born in Sydney, Australia, Margaret Morgan moved to Southern California more than 30 years ago. She now lives in Los Angeles with her husband, Wesley Phoa, who holds a Ph.D. in pure mathematics from Trinity College, Cambridge. He currently works in financial services.

Throughout their lives, the couple has held a deep appreciation for the arts, with music being a shared passion. They remember seeing Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla—a former Dudamel Fellow (in the 2012/13 season) who went on to become an Assistant Conductor (2014–16) and Associate Conductor (2016–17) at the LA Phil—take the stage at the Hollywood Bowl more than a decade ago.

"We were enjoying the summer evening and the company," Margaret recalls, "but then, this young woman got up to the podium—she knocked our socks off. Mirga was electrifying! We were certainly paying attention after that."

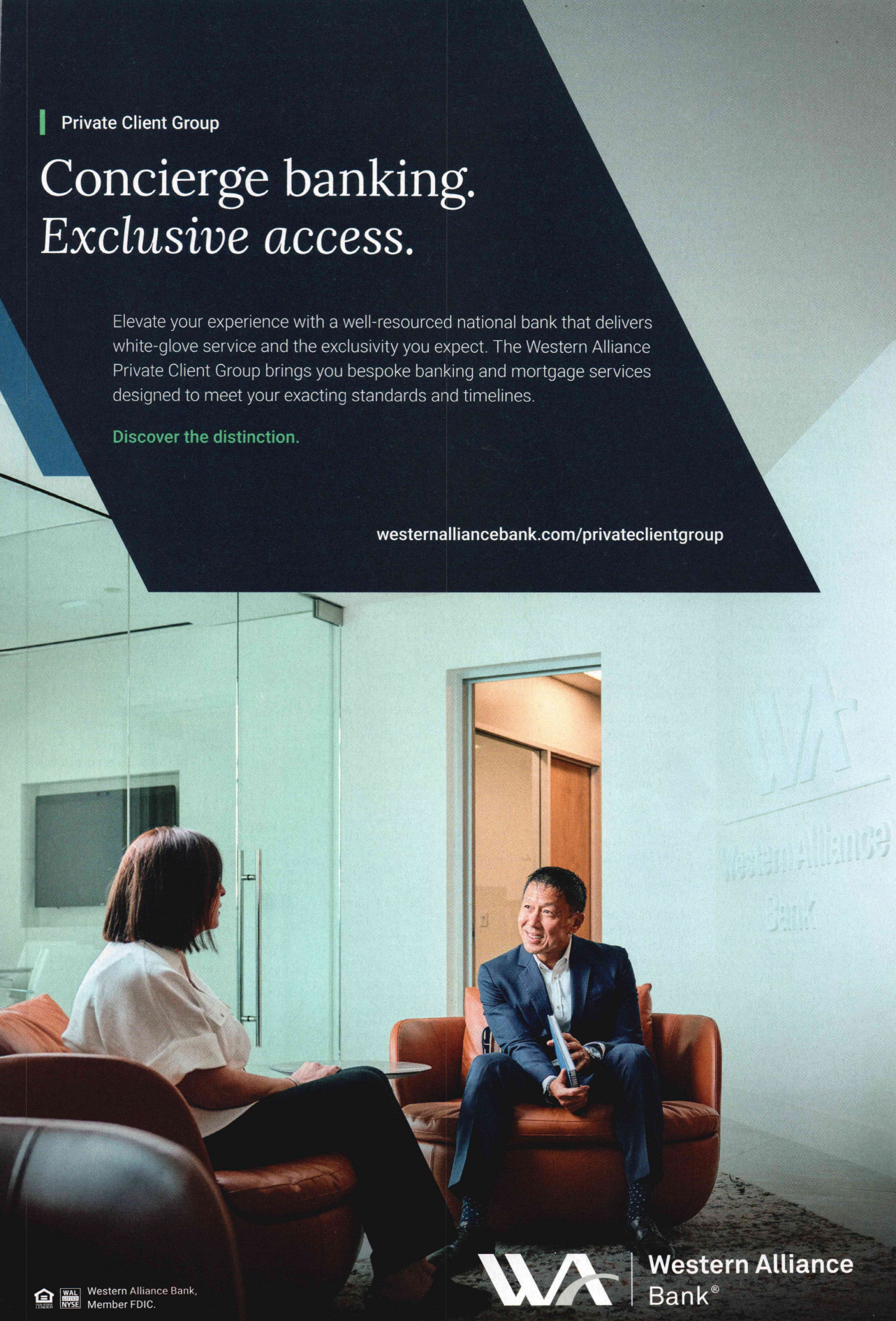
Those summers inspired Margaret and Wesley to become more involved with the LA Phil. In May 2015, Margaret became a director on the LA Phil's Board, and today, she also serves as Vice Chair of the Learning and Community Committee. She cites Gustavo Dudamel's enduring legacy with the LA Phil and commitment to music education as drivers for the couple's partnership and philanthropy. "In many ways, the LA Phil and Gustavo evolved together," Margaret says. "He leaves behind this belief that music is for everyone, and that really resonates with us." For Wesley, "Gustavo brought classical music down from the mountaintop and helped weave it into the fabric of Los Angeles. It means something to the city's people."

Today, the couple has given back in significant ways, including through a recent gift to host Dudamel's culminating Music Director's dinner this spring. At this juncture, paying tribute to the conductor's extraordinary impact while recognizing some of the LA Phil's most generous supporters felt especially timely. And there's another critical force driving their philanthropy: the opportunity to bolster the next generation of musicians by supporting YOLA (Youth Orchestra Los Angeles).

For almost two decades, the LA Phil's YOLA program has helped ensure that young people have access to resources—including free instruments and music instruction—that help them develop invaluable life skills and find their passions through meaningful creative engagement. As Wesley sees it, "Arts and culture have a significant impact on the community and can change lives. Classical music education offers young people a sense of accomplishment and discipline. Practicing an instrument is challenging, but the experience of doing something difficult day after day, week after week teaches students hope and resilience."

Margaret and Wesley see their philanthropic support as "an obligation" to the LA Phil and Los Angeles communities, a sentiment that comes from their own experiences with the organization, and cultural institutions like it, which they see as enriching not just society but individual lives—including their own. The couple hopes their own philanthropy might inspire others to support the places and programs that matter, helping students of today become tomorrow's leading musicians, and moving us all through the transformative power of music.

Learn more about YOLA and how to join Margaret and Wesley in supporting this life-changing program by visiting **laphil.com/learn/yola**.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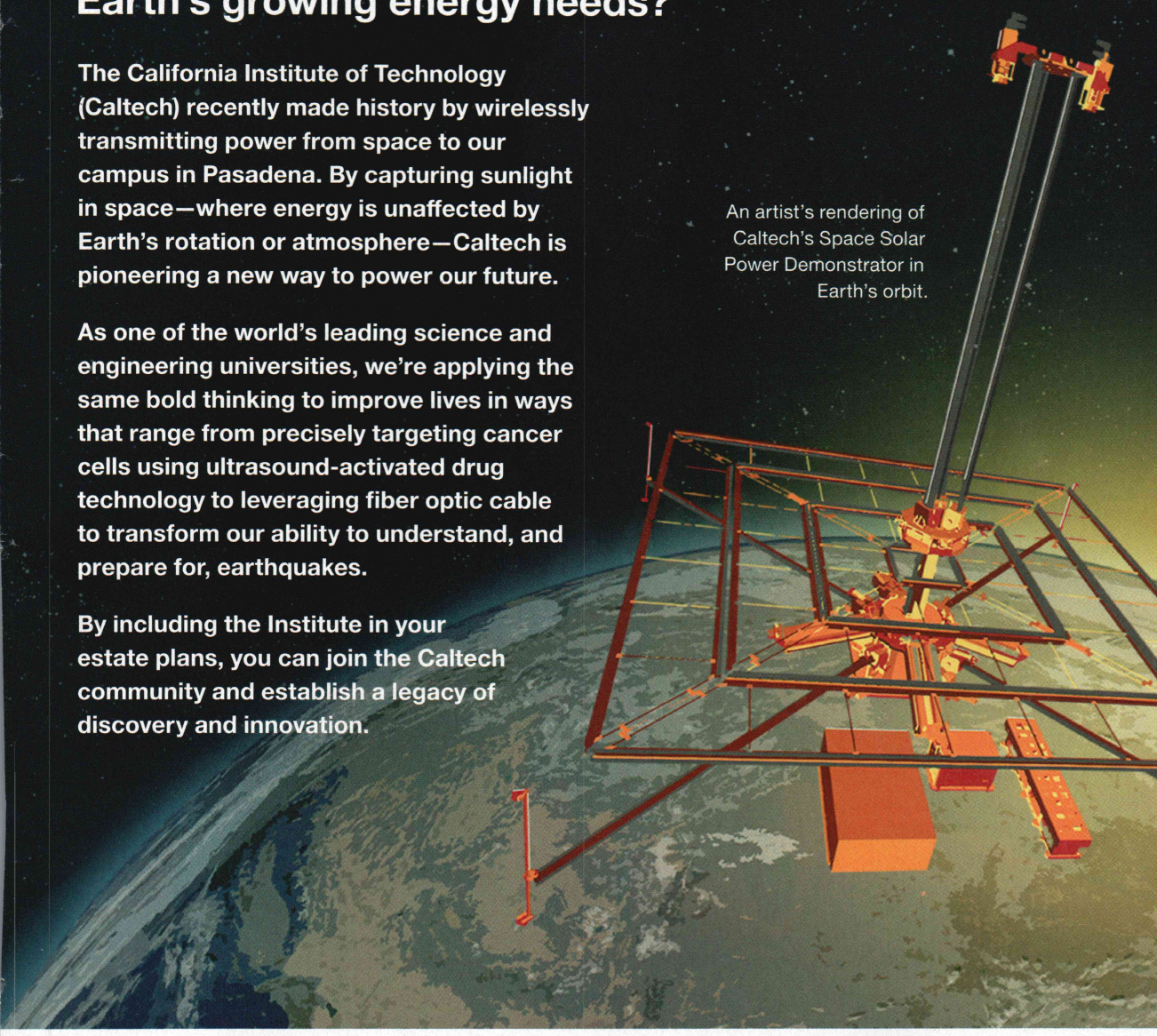

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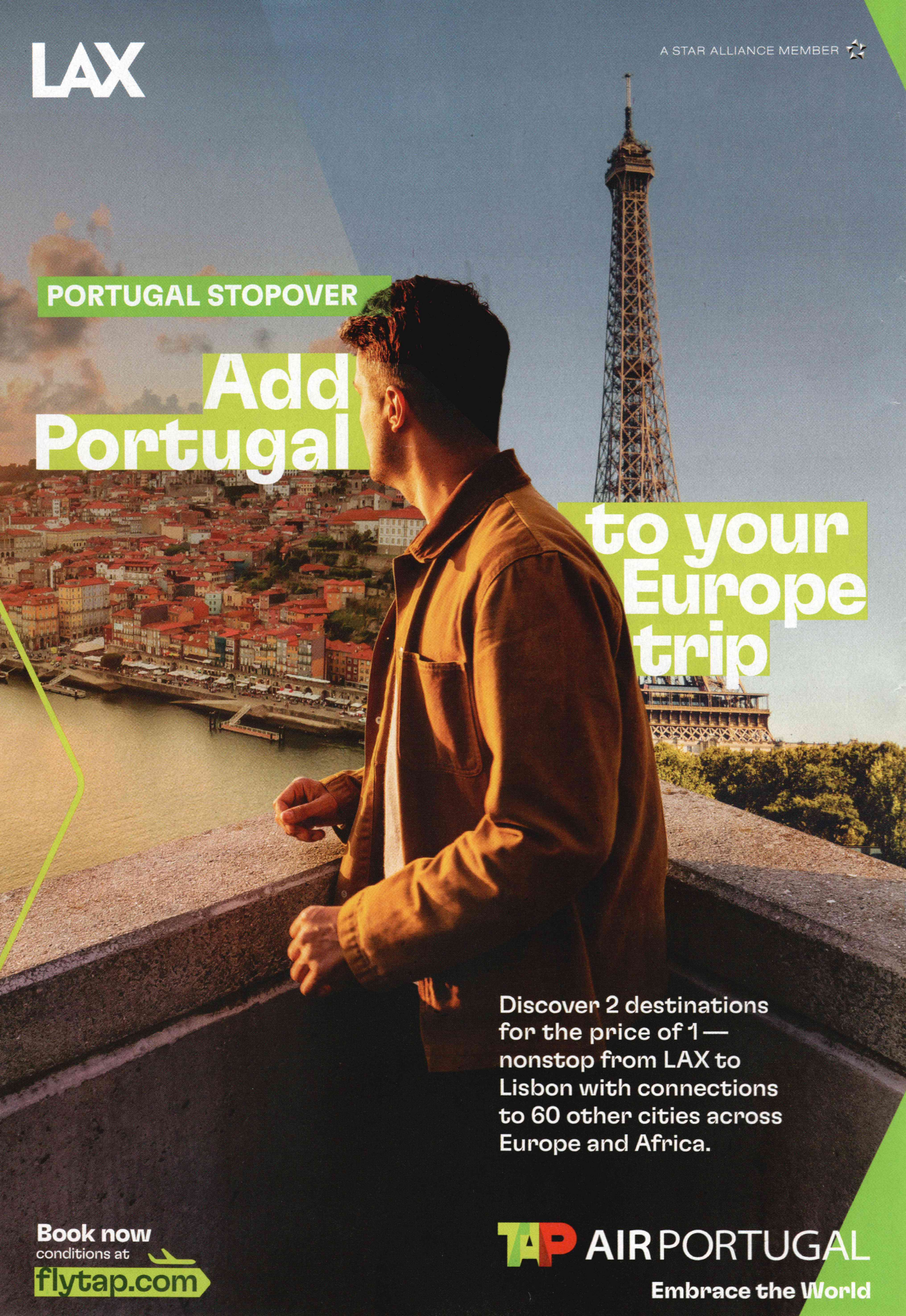
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David Rejano Cantero, trombone
Emmanuel Ceysson, harp
Gloria Cheng, piano

Samuel ADAMS — *Heartwood,* LA Phil Etudes: Book 3, Part 1 (c. 10 minutes) (world premiere, LA Phil commission with generous support from the Lenore S. and Bernard A. Greenberg Fund)
Christopher Hanulik

Francisco COLL — *Partita I,* LA Phil Etudes: Book 3, Part 1 (c. 3 minutes) (world premiere, LA Phil commission with generous support from the Lenore S. and Bernard A. Greenberg Fund)
David Rejano Cantero

Sílvia LANAO — *Desert Bloom* (c. 15 minutes) (world premiere, LA Phil commission with generous support from the Deborah Borda Women in the Arts Initiative)

INTERMISSION

Nico MUHLY — *Unison Spans,* LA Phil Etudes: Book 3, Part 2 (c. 5 minutes) (world premiere, LA Phil commission with generous support from the Lenore S. and Bernard A. Greenberg Fund)
Emmanuel Ceysson

Anthony CHEUNG — *Respire:* Piano Concerto No. 2 (c. 25 minutes) (world premiere, LA Phil commission with principal support from Eve Steele Gelles & Peter Gelles, and Bernard Friedman, with generous additional support from Valerie Dillon & Daniel R. Lewis)
arboreal waves
time-weathered
third wind
Gloria Cheng

TUESDAY
FEBRUARY 3, 2026 8PM

Programs and artists subject to change.

LA Phil
GUSTAVO DUDAMEL
MUSIC & ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

AT A GLANCE

Tonight's performance is a quintessential Green Umbrella program—five world premieres, all commissioned by the LA Phil, and curated by Creative Chair John Adams. Book 3 of the LA Phil Etudes features three solo pieces—one each for bassist Christopher Hanulik, trombonist David Rejano Cantero, and harpist Emmanuel Ceysson—composed by boundary-pushing composers flexing their technical skills.

Sílvia Lanao's *Desert Bloom* is a scenic painting of Southern California's mountains in bloom after a rainstorm. Inspired by the region's topography and arid landscape, Lanao renders the colors and textures of a flowering LA skyline with 12 instruments. Anthony Cheung's *Respire:* Piano Concerto No. 2 ends the program with a deep breath. Composed for LA-based pianist Gloria Cheng, *Respire* plays with the concerto form, mixing the soloist with the orchestra in unexpected ways. **—Tess Carges**

LA PHIL ETUDES: BOOK 3, PARTS 1 & 2

Études, French for "studies," are short pieces composed for the purpose of practice and technical refinement. Some, as in the case of Chopin and Ligeti, evolve into performance pieces. The LA Phil Etudes project was launched in 2021 to highlight individual members of the Los Angeles Philharmonic. Since then, 16 études have been commissioned by Creative Chair John Adams, including the three on today's program. Each étude pairs a contemporary composer with a musician. The requirements for the composers were open-ended, but the form encouraged musical rigor. The resulting pieces remind us of the practice, dedication, and care needed to master an instrument. The LA Phil has premiered nine études thus far, including Gabriela Ortiz's *Tin-Tan-Fanfarria y Mambo* for trumpet; Anthony Cheung's *pulsate, fixate* for flute; David Robertson's *Whorls and Eddies* for horn; and Gabriella Smith's *Quantum Ptarmigan* for viola. Tonight, we hear Book 3 premiered by three Los Angeles Philharmonic musicians.

Samuel Adams' ***Heartwood***, composed for bassist Christopher Hanulik, opens the program. It's rare to see an étude for bass performed, but if anyone could write a compelling one, it's Samuel Adams (b. 1985)—a jazz bassist himself. In an interview with *San Francisco Classical Voice*, Adams declared his affection for and knowledge of the instrument: "I love playing bass. I think it's a wonderful instrument. You have control over the pacing of the music. But it's literally cumbersome. It's a big piece of wood you have to schlep around. It's a low-frequency instrument. Even if you're amplified, it's not suited for a certain kind of expression. So the instrument inspires a desire to express one's creativity in other ways."

Composed for trombonist David Rejano Cantero, Francisco Coll's ***Partita I*** combines the brevity and discipline of an étude with the bravura of a partita. In his note on the piece, Coll (b. 1985) says that *Partita I* is "a reflection of the fast-moving, compressed, and energized character of the social-media age (TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts), seizing the opportunity to engage with the audience in a visceral and immediate way."

For his contribution, Nico Muhly (b. 1981) wrote: "***Unison Spans*** asks the harpist [Emmanuel Ceysson] to maintain an independent voice of one note repeated—a jagged drone. On top of this,

varied spiky interjections, chorales, and fragments of melodies begin to tease apart the drone, but the fundamental motor of the piece remains the same." Like Samuel Adams and Coll, Muhly pushes the boundaries of the instrument, eliciting sounds and moods not often associated with the harp. **—T.C.**

DESERT BLOOM

Sílvia Lanao (b. 1995)

Composed: 2025

Spanish composer Sílvia Lanao wrote *Desert Bloom* as an ode to Los Angeles. Having never visited LA, Lanao relied on images and stories to craft her composition for 12 musicians. A friend had told her about the desert-bloom phenomenon in Southern California, when, after a dry period, a rainstorm produces a widespread blossoming of wildflowers. Lanao says: "There's something very sharp and tough about these mountains, and yet these delicate flowers make their way. This contrast is great inspiration for a musical narrative."

She began to assign sounds to imagery. "I asked myself, 'How would flowers sound?' Well, they wouldn't sound the same as flowers in the Amazon—these seem more fragile, unique." The piece opens with a close-up on the flowers, played by clarinet and flute. "I imagine they bloom, small and fragile in the landscape," says Lanao as she describes the "agile and light" instruments. Piano and harp chime in with harmonies, illustrating a lush image. Once the flowers are established, the piece pans out to the full landscape.

Lanao, whose work is often influenced by textures and colors, decided that the piano and trombone would provide the mountainous edginess. As sharp angles attempt to disrupt the peace, "we go back and focus on the flowers, but they sound different this time," she says. The harmonies are sustained for longer than before as the vibrancy of the flowers starts to fade.

For *Desert Bloom*—her first US commission—Lanao studied American minimalist music and tried to emulate its propulsion, "how it pulls you forward constantly." She also turned to other desert odes like John Luther Adams' *Become Desert*, a slower, drier vision of the landscape. Describing the joy and uplift of her piece, Lanao says: "Maybe it's just in my mind, but I felt very free to get a commission from the US. It allowed me to write in a different way than a European commission would have." **—T.C.**

RESPIRE: PIANO CONCERTO NO. 2

Anthony Cheung (b. 1982)

Composed: 2025

Respire: Piano Concerto No. 2 is structured as a typical three-movement concerto, a form I can't seem to shake; my earlier concerto *A line can go anywhere* follows the same trajectory. And like that piece, while certain conventional expectations are met, there are many departures from the well-known roles that define the interplay of soloist and ensemble. The piano is more often than not complementary and supportive, gathering and depositing layers of sediment in the orchestra through dynamic motion and resonance, and also eroding them away. The wave- and breath-like gestures, especially in the first two movements, extend across many limbs and networks of branches, which together form an organism with multiple simultaneous layers that ultimately breathe as one.

The piece is also a study of breath in multiple forms. In the opening "arboreal waves," gestures and timings of breath on a human scale are conflated with the image of trees and respiration at both the cellular and macro level,

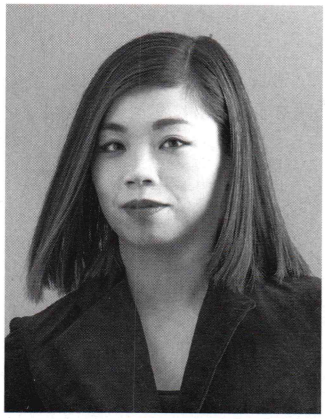
from the components of an individual tree to its large-scale surroundings. Waves build up from gently lulling ripples to stormy cascades. An interlude features the solo piano in conversation with other shadow instruments, most notably a keyboard that gives the illusion of an expanded meta-instrument through special micro-tunings.

A sighing motive becomes the main point of departure in the second movement ("time-weathered") as it drifts from resignation toward outright lament. Later, the mysterious opening strains of Chopin's otherworldly Prelude in A Minor emerge, as in Alfred Cortot's earliest recording from exactly a century ago (1926). Ever the magician, Cortot performs several sleights of hand: Singing right-hand melodies actually sustain (he delivers on the promise of "vibrato" that his edition of the score calls for), and he creates a single, unbroken continuous thread, even with primitive recording technology. Hovering atop and between the notes of the recording are my microtonal embellishments and echoes of the opening horn call. As early as 1852, Johanna Kinkel, the politically and musically radical pianist, composer, and theorist, made calls to "emancipate the quarter tone" in Chopin's music, hearing in its ultra-chromatic, wandering harmonies a desire to push beyond the confines of standard tuning. I take that spirit to heart.

A sudden gust blows unannounced into the finale ("third wind"), and its proverbial second wind is one of constant breathlessness. The same wavelike gestures from the opening movement, once breezy and elegant, are transformed into quick surges and bursts of energy, and phrases become irregular, choppy, and turbulent, pausing only for relief in the middle before being blown off course once again.

Respire is also a celebration of an extraordinary artist and human being who has greatly enriched the contemporary music landscape through her adventurous advocacy. Indeed, contemporary pianism in Los Angeles is synonymous with Gloria Cheng and her indefatigable spirit. I'm so grateful to her for asking me to write this work—commissioned in her honor by Eve Steele, Peter Gelles, and Bernard Friedman, and with the generosity of my friends Valerie Dillon and Daniel Lewis—and I dedicate it to her with affection and admiration.

—Anthony Cheung

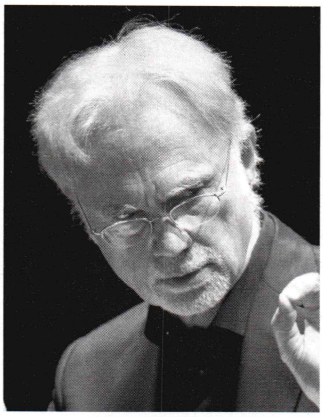


ELIM CHAN

One of the most sought-after artists of her generation, conductor Elim Chan embodies the spirit of contemporary orchestral leadership with her crystalline precision and expressive zeal. She served as Principal Conductor of the Antwerp Symphony Orchestra between 2019 and 2024 and Principal Guest Conductor of the Royal Scottish National Orchestra between 2018 and 2023.

Highlights in the 2025/26 season include return engagements with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, The Cleveland Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, ORF Radio-Symphonieorchester, Staatskapelle Dresden, Luxembourg Philharmonic, and Orchestre de Paris. She also makes her subscription debut with The Philadelphia Orchestra and debuts with the Münchner Philharmoniker, Orchester der Oper Zürich, Bamberger Symphoniker, and Orchestre symphonique de Montréal.

Born in Hong Kong, Elim Chan studied at Smith College in Massachusetts and at the University of Michigan. In 2014, she became the first female winner of the Donatella Flick Conducting Competition and went on to spend her 2015/16 season as Assistant Conductor at the London Symphony Orchestra, where she worked closely with Valery Gergiev. In the following season, Chan joined the Dudamel Fellowship program of the LA Phil. She also owes much to the support and encouragement of Bernard Haitink, whose master classes she attended in Lucerne in 2015.



JOHN ADAMS

Composer, conductor, and creative thinker—John Adams occupies a unique position in the world of American music. His works stand out among contemporary classical compositions for their depth of expression, brilliance of sound, and the profoundly humanist nature of their themes.

Among Adams' works are several of the most performed contemporary classical pieces today: *Harmonielehre, Shaker Loops, Chamber Symphony, Absolute Jest, Short Ride in a Fast Machine,* and his Violin Concerto. His stage works, most created in collaboration with his longtime creative partner Peter Sellars, have transformed the genre of contemporary music theater, including *Nixon in China, The Death of Klinghoffer, El Niño, Doctor Atomic, A Flowering Tree,* the Passion oratorio *The Gospel According to the Other Mary, Girls of the Golden West,* and *Antony and Cleopatra.*

This season, *The Rock You Stand On*—Adams' new orchestral work for Marin Alsop—premieres with The Philadelphia Orchestra, then tours to Katowice (Poland), Manchester (England), New York, Vienna, and Chicago.

Described by *The New York Times* as "our greatest living composer," Adams is the 2019 recipient of the Erasmus Prize "for notable contributions to European culture, society, and social science"—the only American composer to be so honored in the prize's 67-year history. As an advocate of his composer colleagues, Adams has premiered over 100 new works. Since 2009 he has held the position of Creative Chair with the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

CONTINUED

CHRISTOPHER HANULIK

Christopher Hanulik joined the LA Phil in 1984 and was appointed Principal Bass in 1987. He also served as Principal Bass of The Cleveland Orchestra. During his tenure in Cleveland, he made numerous recordings, including *Histoire du Soldat*, conducted by Pierre Boulez for Deutsche Grammophon.

Hanulik appears regularly on the LA Phil's Chamber Music and Green Umbrella series. He has performed with the Miami String Quartet, the Jacques Thibaud String Trio, the Chicago String Quartet, and the Calder Quartet and appeared at the St. Barth Music Festival, Chamber Music Sedona, and La Jolla SummerFest.

DAVID REJANO CANTERO

David Rejano Cantero has been Principal Trombone of the Los Angeles Philharmonic since 2016. Before that, he served as Principal Trombone with the Orquesta Sinfónica de Navarra from 2002 to 2007, Principal Trombone with the Orquesta Sinfónica del Gran Teatre del Liceu Barcelona (Barcelona Opera House) from 2007 to 2010, and Principal Trombone with the Münchner Philharmoniker from 2010 to 2016.

He works frequently with Gustavo Dudamel, Valery Gergiev, and Zubin Mehta. His solo album *Everything but Trombone* was released in 2018.

EMMANUEL CEYSSON

Emmanuel Ceysson joined the Los Angeles Philharmonic in September 2020. His position in a symphony orchestra came after almost 15 years of playing principal harp in opera orchestras, first with the Paris Opera, a job he won at the age of 22, and then with the Metropolitan Opera in New York for five full seasons.

Born and raised in France, Ceysson was admitted unanimously to the Paris Conservatoire when he was 16, and he went on to an acclaimed solo career, as a recitalist and soloist.

GLORIA CHENG

Acclaimed for performances of "commanding technique, color, and imagination" (*The New York Times*), Grammy- and Emmy-winning pianist Gloria Cheng is a leading proponent of the music of our time. She has collaborated with renowned composers across the stylistic spectrum, premiering works by John Adams, Thomas Adès, Pierre Boulez, Anthony Davis, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Steven Stucky, John Williams, and many others.

Winner of the Best Instrumental Soloist Performance (Without Orchestra) Grammy for her 2008 recording, *Piano Music of Salonen, Stucky, and Lutosławski*, she received a second nomination for her 2013 disc, *The Edge of Light: Messiaen / Saariaho*.

For more information about tonight's artists and pieces, please visit:

Thomas Adès and Yuja Wang featuring Prokofiev and Tchaikovsky

Los Angeles Philharmonic
Thomas Adès, conductor
Yuja Wang, piano

FRIDAY
FEBRUARY 6, 2026 8PM

SATURDAY
FEBRUARY 7 2PM

SUNDAY
FEBRUARY 8 2PM

William MARSEY — *Man with Limp Wrist* (c. 19 minutes)
(US premiere, LA Phil commission with generous support from the MaddocksBrown Fund for New Music)

- Ghost Story
- Bar Boy
- The Texter
- The After-Party
- Family Photo
- The Reader
- Three Friends
- Man with Limp Wrist

PROKOFIEV — Piano Concerto No. 2 in G minor, Op. 16 (c. 30 minutes)

- Andantino—Allegretto
- Scherzo: Vivace
- Intermezzo: Allegro moderato
- Finale: Allegro tempestoso

Yuja Wang

INTERMISSION

TCHAIKOVSKY — *Francesca da Rimini,* Op. 32 (c. 25 minutes)

Thomas ADÈS — *Aquifer* (c. 17 minutes)

Programs and artists subject to change.

LA Phil
GUSTAVO DUDAMEL
MUSIC & ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

AT A GLANCE

The painter Salman Toor says he looks "at the world through an art historical lens, always finding it everywhere." His ability to fuse Renaissance and Baroque techniques with contemporary subjects in intimately personal paintings caught the eye of composer William Marsey, who translated these images for the ear in a suite based on eight of Toor's canvases, deconstructing centuries-old melodies in what he calls "a tangled web of musical inheritance."

Like Toor and Marsey, Tchaikovsky also looked to the Renaissance, specifically Dante's *Divine Comedy*, while writing *Francesca di Rimini*, a symphonic poem about two unfortunate lovers doomed to swirl in winds of hell. However, Prokofiev's Piano Concerto No. 2, performed by the exquisite soloist Yuja Wang, is the work of a 21-year-old firebrand aspiring to shape a new sound for a quickly modernizing world.

The program concludes with conductor Thomas Adès' own *Aquifer*, a dense 17-minute virtuosic suite for orchestra that harnesses water's kinetic energy. Says Adès: "In *Aquifer*, I wanted the pressure of it to be so great that...the whole orchestra is like a big instrument, quivering, on the verge of exploding in saturation." **—Amanda Angel**

MAN WITH LIMP WRIST

William Marsey (b. 1989)

Composed: 2023; rev. 2024

Orchestration: 2 flutes (2nd=piccolo), 2 oboes (2nd=English horn), 2 clarinets (2nd=bass clarinet), 2 bassoons (2nd=contrabassoon), 2 horns, 2 trumpets, 2 trombones, tuba, timpani, and strings

First LA Phil performance.

The title for this piece comes from a 2019 oil painting by Salman Toor. It's a tall, thin canvas, a whole-body portrait of a naked man in introspection. The painting has always struck me as unusual. Toor's work of that time usually features characters in the midst of dynamic, domestic scenes, his distinctive protagonists (ciphers for the painter himself) finding themselves in quiet moments at crowded bars, at parties with friends, enjoying quiet reveries in the glow of a smartphone. The central character of *Man with Limp Wrist*, however, is a single, posed figure, standing alone against a gray wall, one arm raised with a dangling hand, his gaze averted.

Toor's style inspires the whole set as well as the eponymous final movement. The preceding seven parts of this piece concentrate on other paintings by the artist, each describing single fleeting moods or scenes, domestic settings. And as Toor references the old masters in his composition and subject matter, so does my music navigate historical foundations, drawing upon melodies and harmonies from centuries-old hymns, breaking down and reassembling them into fragments that repeat, meditate, and unravel.

As I whittle away at these old songs to make something new, their remnants spread throughout my work in a tangled web of musical inheritance. Their rigid stanza structures collide and interfere with their new forms. In "Ghost Story," unmoored elements of a Bach Passion hymn drift forwards calmly before taking abrupt, startled leaps. The tune in "Bar Boy" loops and drunkenly scrambles over its accompaniment, while "Family Photo" weaves its disparately sourced melodies and bass lines into a new, harmonious whole. **—William Marsey**

PIANO CONCERTO NO. 2 IN G MINOR, OP. 16

Sergei Prokofiev (1891–1953)

Composed: 1912–13; rev. 1923

Orchestration: 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (bass drum, cymbals, snare drum, tambourine), strings, and solo piano

First LA Phil performance: August 11, 1953, Erich Leinsdorf conducting, with Jorge Bolet, soloist

On a summer evening in 1912, Sergei Prokofiev, a gangling 21-year-old, stepped onto a Moscow stage to jolt the world with his First Piano Concerto. It was greeted with hisses, boos, and catcalls by the majority, against wild cheering from a vocal minority. A year later, the composer-pianist introduced his Second Piano Concerto in the resort town of Pavlovsk, near Saint Petersburg.

The critic of the *Saint Petersburg Journal* wrote of the event: "Prokofiev, a youth with the face of a high school student, takes his seat at the piano and appears to be either dusting the keys or trying out the notes to see which are high and which low.... The audience does not know what to make of it. Indignant murmurs are heard. One couple rises and moves toward the exit. Others leave their seats.... The young man concludes his concerto with a mercilessly dissonant combination of sounds from the brass. The scandal in the audience is full-blown. The majority of them are hissing. Another, smaller group, the progressives, are in ecstasy: 'A work of genius! How innovative! What spirit and originality.'"

If the First Concerto was an assault, a tightly controlled, continual shower of sparks, the Second is at once more discursive, darker, on a grander scale—and even more virtuosic. The "football touch," as Prokofiev's Soviet-era biographer Israel Nestyev aptly put it, has been tempered by a richer piano sonority, and there is a good deal more for the orchestra to do, although that is hardly apparent at the outset with the spotlighting of the solo piano featuring an expansive, lushly melancholy principal theme and a vast, knuckle-busting cadenza. "But the concerto is also bursting with music for the machine age," in the words of Harlow Robinson, a respected chronicler of Soviet-era music, "particularly in the second movement... an infectiously optimistic episode of perpetual motion that moves with the relentless force and fluidity of a speeding locomotive."

The third movement's grotesque, crunching tread—like the lumbering of some immense prehistoric beast—is a harbinger of Prokofiev's juggernaut *Scythian Suite*, while the finale, a mixture of crush and dash, projects an updated version of Lisztian bravura, with a misty contrasting episode sounding rather like Ravel, making an accidental incursion into this brutal world.

It should be noted that the Second Concerto known to us may not be precisely what the audience heard in 1913 but rather a reconstruction Prokofiev made in 1923. Presumably, he used most of the same material as in the original, unpublished orchestral score, which was destroyed in a fire; he reintroduced the Second Concerto in 1924 at one of Koussevitzky's legendary concerts in Paris. **—Herbert Glass**

FRANCESCA DA RIMINI, OP. 32

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–93)

Composed: 1876

Orchestration: 3 flutes (3rd=piccolo), 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 cornets, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (bass drum, cymbals, tam-tam), harp, and strings

First LA Phil performance: March 25, 1928, Georg Schnéevoigt conducting

Tales of doomed love attracted Tchaikovsky in all musical forms—for example, the *Manfred* Symphony, the

ballet *Swan Lake*, the opera *Eugene Onegin*, the fantasy overture *Romeo and Juliet*. In 1876 he listened with interest to proposals for an opera on the story of the adulterous lovers Francesca and Paolo as recounted in the "Inferno" section of Dante's *Divine Comedy*. Nothing came of the opera, but Tchaikovsky's brother Modest persuaded him to depict the tragedy in a symphonic poem. (Modest himself later wrote an opera libretto on the subject, set by Sergei Rachmaninoff.)

The story, based on a historical incident, concerns the fraudulent courtship and marriage of young Francesca of the north Italian town of Rimini. For political reasons, her marriage to Giovanni Malatesta is arranged when she is tricked into believing that Giovanni's handsome younger brother Paolo is her intended husband. Tragedy is consummated almost as swiftly as the marriage: the unhappy Francesca and Paolo become lovers, Giovanni catches them in the act and kills them. Dante found their souls left twisting in the winds of the second circle of hell as moral lessons.

Tchaikovsky's virtuosic orchestral collage opens with the poet's lugubrious trudge in search of hellish edification. He soon encounters gale-force wind, gusting fiercely to the tune of a truly devilish tarantella. The music is more gestural than melodic, but then Francesca begins her narration with one of Tchaikovsky's most gorgeous tunes, deeply felt and richly characterized. "A melody never stands alone, but invariably with the harmonies which belong to it," the composer wrote. "These two elements, together with the rhythm, must never be separated; every melodic idea brings its own inevitable harmony and its suitable rhythm." Tchaikovsky certainly delivered the full package here. The first half of the melody is infinitely sorrowing in downward sighs, first heard in a plaintive clarinet solo. The second half of this thematic yin and yang turns minor mode to major and the descending droops to upward yearning in the strings.

These elements are developed at length into passionate outpourings, cut off with the abrupt blows of the murder. The howling winds return, and 10 hammered chords end the work with the finality of damnation. **—John Henken**

AQUIFER

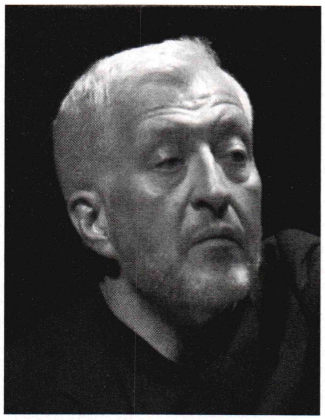
Thomas Adès (b. 1971)

Composed: 2024

Orchestration: 3 flutes (3rd=piccolo), 3 oboes (3rd=English horn), 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 3 bassoons (3rd=contraforte), 4 horns, 3 trumpets (1st=piccolo trumpet), 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (crotales, glockenspiel, vibraphone, chimes, damaged bell plates, tam-tam, sizzle cymbal, clash cymbals, suspended cymbal, hi-hat, metal scaffolding bars, snare drum, bass drum, rattles, whip), piano, harp, and strings

First LA Phil performance.

This work is a musical structure in one movement, requiring seven sections. In the first section, beginning with an introduction in which the material wells up from the deepest notes, the theme is presented first by the flutes and then builds to three statements in all using more and more of the orchestra. After a breakdown, the slower second section presents the theme again but with more unstable rhythm and harmony. There follows a slow section with a crawling chromatic bass line. This culminates in an acceleration into the fast-flowing fourth section, which in turns slows to a mysterious stillness. From there the fifth section builds with all elements gradually combining towards a return to the opening material, which again breaks down to a darker slow section with dragging movement, from which the music escapes into a reprise of the fast-flowing fourth section, culminating in an ecstatic coda. **—Thomas Adès**



THOMAS ADÈS

Thomas Adès was born in London in 1971. His compositions include three operas; he conducted the premiere of the most recent, *The Exterminating Angel*, at the 2016 Salzburg Festival and subsequently at the Metropolitan Opera, New York; and the Royal Opera House, London. He conducted the premiere and revival of *The Tempest* at the Royal Opera House and a new production at the Metropolitan Opera, Wiener Staatsoper, and in November 2022 at La Scala, Milan. Adès led the world premiere of his full-evening ballet *The Dante Project* at Covent Garden and conducted it in May 2023 at the Opéra Garnier, Paris. He conducted a new production of *The Exterminating Angel*, featuring a critically acclaimed staging by Calixto Bieito, in spring 2024 at the Opéra Bastille in Paris.

He frequently leads performances of his orchestral works *Asyla* (1997); *Tevot* (2007); *Polaris* (2010); Violin Concerto *Concentric Paths* (2005); *In Seven Days* for piano and orchestra (2008); *Totentanz* for mezzo-soprano, baritone, and orchestra (2013); and the Concerto for Piano and Orchestra (2019). Other recent works include *Shanty – Over the Sea* for strings (2020); *Märchentänze* for solo violin and piano and a separate version with orchestra (2021); *Air – Homage to Sibelius* for violin and orchestra, a Roche commission for Anne-Sophie Mutter (2022); and *Aquifer*, an orchestral work commissioned by the Symphoniorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks with support from Carnegie Hall and the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Vienna.

The 2025/26 season sees Adès debut with the Swedish Radio Symphony and Gürzenich-Orchester Köln. Return engagements include the BBC Symphony (Proms), London Symphony, the Hallé, Czech Philharmonic, Concertgebouworkest, New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, and Vienna Radio Symphony. Adès also serves as the Creative Chair of the Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich for the 2025/26 season and celebrates the 100th birthday of György Kurtág at the Budapest Music Center.

The world-premiere recording of Thomas Adès' *Dante* by Gustavo Dudamel and the Los Angeles Philharmonic won the Grammy Award for Best Orchestral Performance in February 2024. Recorded live at Walt Disney Concert Hall and released through Nonesuch, *Dante* is a 90-minute ballet score in three parts inspired by Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy*. It debuted as part of *The Dante Project* ballet at the Royal Opera House in 2021, choreographed by Wayne McGregor and designed by Tacita Dean.

Adès' recording of *The Tempest* from the Royal Opera House (EMI) won the Contemporary category of the 2010 Gramophone Awards; his DVD of the production from the Metropolitan Opera was awarded the Diapason d'Or de l'année (2013), Best Opera Recording (2014 Grammy Awards), and Music DVD Recording of the Year (2014 Echo Klassik Awards). Recent piano releases include an album of solo piano music by Janáček and a live album of *Winterreise* with Ian Bostridge. Adès' solo disc of Janáček's piano music won the 2018 Janáček medal. In 2023, Adès was awarded the BBVA Foundation Frontiers of Knowledge Award.

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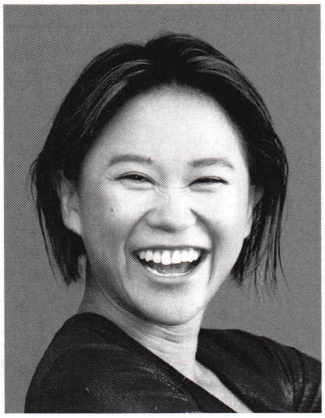


YUJA WANG

Pianist Yuja Wang is celebrated for her charismatic artistry, emotional honesty, and captivating stage presence. She has performed with the world's most venerated conductors, musicians, and ensembles and is renowned not only for her virtuosity but also for her spontaneous and lively performances, famously telling *The New York Times*, "I firmly believe every program should have its own life, and be a representation of how I feel at the moment."

Wang was born into a musical family and began studying the piano at the age of 6. She received advanced training in Canada and at the Curtis Institute of Music under Gary Graffman. Her international breakthrough came in 2007, when she replaced Martha Argerich as soloist with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Two years later, she signed an exclusive contract with Deutsche Grammophon and has since established her place among the world's leading artists with a succession of critically acclaimed performances and albums. Her recordings have garnered multiple awards, including six Grammy nominations and her first Grammy win for Best Classical Instrumental Solo for her 2023 release of *The American Project*. For this she also won an Opus Klassik award in the concerto category.

Recent ventures include a collaborative project with David Hockney at London's Lightroom, play-direct tours with the Mahler Chamber Orchestra to Europe and South America, an international duo recital tour with pianist Víkingur Ólafsson, and a residency with the New York Philharmonic.

Yuja Wang opened the 2025/26 seasons of many major US orchestras, including the San Francisco Symphony and The Philadelphia Orchestra. At Carnegie Hall's opening gala, she play-directed the Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No. 1. Among her orchestral performances, she embarks on a major European tour with the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra. Other orchestral appearances this season include performances with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, Cleveland Orchestra, and Rotterdam Philharmonic. Her play-directing continues on tours with the Mahler Chamber Orchestra to Spain and the US, and she gives a recital tour throughout Asia. In November 2025, *Playing with Fire: An Immersive Odyssey with Yuja Wang* opened at the Paris Philharmonie. This groundbreaking multisensory installation takes visitors behind the scenes and offers a rare perspective on the emotion and artistry behind Wang's performances.

Thomas Ospital

Thomas Ospital, organ

VIERNE — Organ Symphony No. 3 in F-sharp minor, Op. 28 (c. 35 minutes)
- Allegro maestoso
- Cantilène: Andantino moderato
- Intermezzo: Allegretto non vivo
- Adagio: Quasi largo
- Final: Allegro

INTERMISSION

SAINT-SAËNS transribed by Louis ROBILLIARD — *Danse macabre,* Op. 40 (c. 9 minutes)

RAVEL transcribed by Thomas OSPITAL — *Le tombeau de Couperin* (orchestral suite) (c. 20 minutes)
- Prélude
- Forlane
- Menuet
- Rigaudon

Thomas OSPITAL — *Improvisation*

Programs and artists subject to change.

SUNDAY
FEBRUARY 8, 2026 7:30PM

This performance is generously supported by **Mari L. Danihel**.

Michael Wilson is Walt Disney Concert Hall Organ Conservator.

Manuel Rosales and Morgan Byrd are principal technicians for the Walt Disney Concert Hall organ.

laphil.com/organstoplist

LA Phil
GUSTAVO DUDAMEL
MUSIC & ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

AT A GLANCE

As the Baroque period ebbed in the second half of the 18th century, so did the popularity of organ music. It took nearly 100 years for a revival to renew interest in the instrument, thanks largely to the efforts of the Paris-based César Franck (1822–90) and Camille Saint-Saëns (1835–1921). As organists and composers, both expanded the instrument's repertoire and showed its versatility. French organist Thomas Ospital traces this legacy in tonight's program, starting with Organ Symphony No. 3 by Franck's pupil Louis Vierne. Though not originally intended for organ, Saint-Saëns' *Danse macabre*, Op. 40, here in an arrangement by Lyon-based organist Louis Robilliard, takes full advantage of the instrument's palette. Maurice Ravel inherited the teachings of Saint-Saëns (through Gabriel Fauré) while he was a student at the Paris Conservatory, where Ospital is currently a professor. He closes the evening in the present with an improvisation of his own.

ORGAN SYMPHONY NO. 3 IN F-SHARP MINOR, OP. 28

Louis Vierne (1870–1937)

Composed: 1911

The organ symphonies of French composers are more often represented in abridged forms in modern recitals, which makes a complete performance of Louis Vierne's Organ Symphony No. 3 worth relishing. Written in 1911, it was dedicated to and premiered by his longtime friend and protégé Marcel Dupré (1886–1971), before they had a famous falling-out.

Commencing with a loud, highly chromatic Allegro maestoso, the main theme is stated fortississimo and then repeats itself in a roughly inverted form—emphasizing with tenuto the ultimate three quarter notes. From there, the first movement proceeds in a sonata-allegro form. After a transition of highly chromatic, stridently dissonant large chords developing the opening theme, a second theme is introduced with the indication "sostenuto e legato." The running eighth notes of the second theme transform into even faster 16th notes, eventually leading to the closing of the exposition with variations of the opening theme. A development section follows, as does the recapitulation in an even louder, more strident chromatic presentation emphasizing large chords.

If this first movement pushes the limits of how loud the instrument can play, the second movement, Cantilène, explores its softer limits. A playful Intermezzo movement in triple meter follows, borrowing much from the character of a scherzo. These two movements also adhere to sonata-allegro form.

The fourth-movement Adagio (so titled even though the tempo indication is "quasi largo") returns to the soft, homophonic idiom of the Cantilène, but with a much more Wagnerian use of chromaticism. It begins with the slowly unfolding canonic layering of an opening theme in a diffuse B minor. A middle section develops with a declamatory melody before a flute solo heralds a return of the opening theme, which is developed further in the closing section.

The Final offers everything of the typical French toccata—rapid ostinato passages on the keyboards with a slow melody in the pedals—that often closes such organ symphonies, but develops in a more contrapuntal and multifarious way. A recognizable second theme repeats and then recurs between the sections that repeat the opening theme. The ostinato built on fifths resonates into a continuous harmony, while carefully notated dynamics test the organist's skill on the swell pedal.

Above all, Vierne uses established forms to his advantage, allowing him to edit and perfect his musical ideas based on an abstract ideal. *—From the LA Phil archive*

DANSE MACABRE, OP. 40

Camille Saint-Saëns (1835–1921)

Transcribed by
Louis Robilliard (b. 1939)

Composed: 1874

Camille Saint-Saëns was many things. A scholar and writer of wide-ranging interests and an equally wide-ranging traveler, he was also a multifaceted musician who excelled as a keyboardist,

composer, conductor, teacher, and editor. He lived to scorn the work of Debussy and Stravinsky (among others) and is often regarded as a conservative—if not reactionary—composer. But in the early and middle years of his career, Saint-Saëns championed the most progressive wing of contemporary music, and his own music was often highly original in form and orchestration.

Danse macabre is a case in point. It is one of four tone poems Saint-Saëns composed in the 1870s, all inspired to some degree by Franz Liszt (whose own *Totentanz*, or "dance of death," dates from 1849) and exploring both his concept of thematic transformation and novel instrumentation. Saint-Saëns set a number of poems by Henri Cazalis (1840–1909) and wrote a sung version of *Danse macabre* in 1872 based on the poet's "Égalité, fraternité...." The text merges the legend of Death fiddling on Halloween as skeletons dance on their graves with the late-Medieval Dance of Death, in which all, king to peasant, are led dancing to the grave.

Saint-Saëns expanded the song into a tone poem in 1874, giving much of the vocal part to a solo violin and using xylophone (then almost exclusively a folk instrument) to depict the rattling skeleton bones. The obbligato violin makes much use of the tritone, the diminished-fifth interval known to earlier musicians as the diabolus in musica, even tuning the instrument's E string to E-flat to eerie effect. Saint-Saëns also introduces, about midway through, the *Dies irae*, a Gregorian-chant theme from the Requiem Mass much employed by composers to summon scenes of death and judgment.

The piece caused some predictable consternation at its premiere, particularly the waltzing *Dies irae* and the (deliberately) abrasive scordatura (mistuning). But it also quickly became a popular hit. Liszt himself arranged it for piano not long after the premiere, and it soon found other keyboard transcriptions, including piano four hands and organ. **—John Henken**

LE TOMBEAU DE COUPERIN

Maurice Ravel (1875–1937)

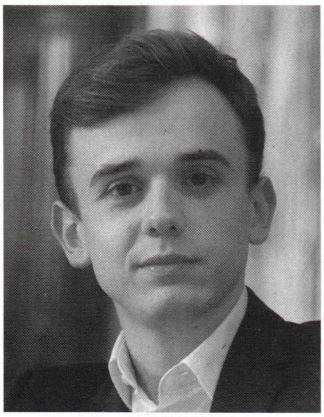
Transcribed by
Thomas Ospital (b. 1990)

Composed: 1914–17, orch. 1919

For Ravel, craftsmanship did not imply sameness: "I have never limited myself to a 'Ravel' style," he once quipped. His music abounds with idiosyncratic effects and divergent impulses, its overflowing inventiveness shaped by a natural expressive economy and its meticulously crafted phrases awash in sensuous instrumental color. He was open to the myriad sounds of the early-20th-century environment; as he expressed to an American journalist, "The world is changing and contradicting itself as never before. I am happy to be living through all this and to have the good fortune of being a composer." This ability to retain a sense of balance while surrounded by the artistic and social chaos of early Modernism allowed Ravel to find stimulation in an eclectic mix of sources without boxing himself into any particular "ism." As a result, his music retains a freshness that sounds more forward-looking the older it gets.

In *Le tombeau de Couperin*, originally composed for piano in 1917, Ravel expressed his modern sensibility in the accents of the 1700s. He described it as an homage "directed less in fact to Couperin himself than to French music of the 18th century." Disregarding the philosopher (and would-be composer) Jean-Jacques Rousseau's 1753 pronouncement that "there is neither rhythm nor melody in French music," Ravel fused rhythmic and melodic forms and cadences of Couperin's time with those of his own. The work conveys a sense of the present as a perennially open dialogue with the past.

Tonight's soloist, Thomas Ospital, provides his own transcription of the piece, following the structure of the four-movement orchestral suite rather than the six-movement original for piano. The Prélude delicately ripples with Baroque ornamentation cast through a Modernist lens. Ravel's wide-ranging melody and subtle rhythmic inflections impart a lithe grace to the Italian Forlane. The graceful Menuet sparkles, while the bustling Rigaudon captures the peculiar vivacity of French society in any century. **—Susan Key**



THOMAS OSPITAL

Titulaire of the grand organ at Saint-Eustache Church in Paris and Professor of Organ Interpretation and Harmony at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Paris (CNSMDP), Thomas Ospital is a young artist who has quickly earned a place among the world's finest concert organists.

He is a laureate of numerous competitions, receiving First Prize at the 2009 International Competition of Organ in Zaragoza, Spain; the Duruflé Prize and the Audience Prize at the 2012 International Organ Competition "Grand Prix de Chartres"; and Second Prize at the 2013 Toulouse International Organ Competition. In May 2014 he took the Grand Prize Jean-Louis Florentz and the Audience Prize at the International Organ Competition of Angers under the direction of the Académie des Beaux-Arts, and in November 2014 he was awarded Second Prize, Audience Prize, and the Florentz Prize at the International Organ Competition in Chartres.

Ospital is equally at home performing as a solo recitalist or with choir or orchestra. He is also eager to perpetuate the art of improvisation in all of its forms, including the accompaniment of silent films. His performances have taken him throughout Europe, including the United Kingdom, Spain, Italy, Greece, Germany, Switzerland, and the Netherlands. He has also performed in Russia, Australia, and North America, where in 2012 he served for six months as Young Artist in Residence at the Cathedral-Basilica of St. Louis King of France in New Orleans.

Born in 1990, Thomas Ospital began his musical studies at the Conservatoire Maurice Ravel in Bayonne, France, completing his studies with Esteban Landart in 2008. From 2008 to 2015 he was a student at the Paris Conservatory, where he earned First Place prizes in organ, improvisation, harmony, counterpoint, and fugue. His teachers at the Paris Conservatory included Olivier Latry, Michel Bouvard, Thierry Escaich, Philippe Lefebvre, László Fassang, Isabelle Duha, Pierre Pincemaille, and Jean-François Zygel.

Ospital currently serves as Titular Organist of the largest pipe organ in France: the Grand Organ at Saint-Eustache in Paris. He took up the post in 2015, succeeding Jean Guillou. From 2016 to 2019 he served as the first Organist in Residence at Radio France. He is also Professor of Organ Interpretation alongside Olivier Latry (appointed 2021) and Professor of Harmony (appointed 2017) at CNSMDP.

Lunar New Year

Members of the Los Angeles Philharmonic

TUESDAY
FEBRUARY 10, 2026 8PM

HUANG
arr. Cheng2 Duo

Horse Racing (c. 4 minutes)
Dahae Kim, cello
Joanne Pearce Martin, piano

Dai WEI

Three Pieces for String Quartet (c. 12 minutes)
Playful
Hushed
Agitated
Ashley Park, violin
Emily Shehi, violin
Dana Lawson, viola
Zachary Mowitz, cello

TRADITIONAL
arr. Yi-Wen JIANG

Selections from *ChinaSong* (c. 25 minutes)
5 Yunnan Folk Songs: No. 1, Dali Girl
5 Yunnan Folk Songs: No. 2, Following the Brother
5 Yunnan Folk Songs: No. 5, Dragon Lantern Song
Reflection of the Moon in the Er-Quan Spring
Red Flowers in Bloom
Bing Wang, violin
Melody Ye Yuan, violin
Jenni Seo, viola
Dahae Kim, cello

INTERMISSION

MOZART

String Quartet No. 21 in D major, K. 575 (c. 24 minutes)
Allegretto
Andante
Menuetto: Allegretto
Allegretto
Tianyun Jia, violin
Weilu Zhang, violin
Minor L. Wetzel, viola
David Garrett, cello

Programs and artists subject to change.

LA Phil
GUSTAVO DUDAMEL
MUSIC & ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Tonight, musicians of the Los Angeles Philharmonic mark the most important holiday for most Asian cultures: Lunar New Year. This February 17, people across the globe will celebrate the start of the Year of the Fire Horse, according to the Chinese zodiac. For many, the festivities will run for 15 days to greet a fresh new year and ensure prosperous months ahead.

Our program begins with Haihuai Huang's ***Horse Racing,*** which nods to the Fire Horse—whose coming promises passion, intensity, and transformation for 2026. Huang (1935–67) captures the furious energy and drive of the competing steeds in his phrasing. Originally written in 1959 for erhu, a Chinese two-stringed instrument, the work is presented tonight in an arrangement for cello and piano. With its concise length, galloping tempo, and whinnying melisma at the close, the piece captures the grace and power of two exquisite equines and remains a popular staple of the Chinese musical repertoire.

Born in China and now based in the US, where she is a doctoral student at Princeton University, Dai Wei (b. 1989) writes music that combines elements of Eastern and Western traditions. Last season she was the Sound Investment Composer for Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, and she has been commissioned by eminent ensembles including the American Composers Orchestra, Kronos Quartet with pipa player Wu Man, and many others. Her **Three Pieces for String Quartet** (2016) comprise a trio of miniatures: "Playful," "Hushed," and "Agitated."

Yi-Wen Jiang (b. 1963) began the project that would culminate in ***ChinaSong*** during his 26-year tenure as a violinist with the Shanghai Quartet. "To expand the repertoire of the Shanghai Quartet, the idea of arranging Chinese tunes into string quartet pieces was born. The finished works have proven to be showpieces and well-received encores at our concerts," he wrote in the introduction to an anthology of the pieces, published in 2018. A collection of 24 miniatures was recorded by the Shanghai Quartet in 2002. Jiang compares his arrangements of favorite Chinese melodies—ones that he played "during the dark days of the Chinese Cultural Revolution"—to the folk-inflected music of Bartók, Dvořák, Brahms, and many other Western composers. Jiang's purpose was twofold: to introduce Chinese music to American audiences and to help popularize chamber music in China. The first three selections come from 5 Yunnan Folk Songs, inspired by the China's southern province: the melancholy tinged "Dali Girl," the enigmatic "Following the Brothers," and the playful "Dragon Lantern Song." Reflections of the Moon in the Er-Quan Spring is an arrangement of a classic erhu tune written by the blind musician Ah Bing that, like the season, unfolds in a gentle, sinuous melody. The final selection, Red Flowers in Bloom, builds on the previous one, transitioning from a serene opening to a swift dance before coming full circle to a grand statement of the beginning theme.

The evening closes with the sole European work on the program, **Mozart's String Quartet No. 21 in D major, K. 575.** This cheerful crowd pleaser was written at one of Mozart's more desperate moments, when in dire financial straits and poor health he sold three of his "Prussian" quartets to a publisher. The composer (1756–91) had intended the works for Friedrich Wilhelm II, King of Prussia (hence their nickname) before peddling them "simply in order to have cash in hand merely to meet my present difficulties," he admitted to a friend.

The lighthearted Allegretto provides an enchanting opening, followed by an elegantly restrained Andante. The cello—the chosen instrument of Friedrich Wilhelm II—comes to the fore in the third-movement minuet with a lovely countermelody, and it continues its lead into the finale by introducing the main theme, which is expanded, developed, inverted, and recapitulated with the effortless grace that is Mozart's trademark.
—Amanda Angel

TONIGHT'S ARTISTS

Tianyuan Jia, violin
Ashley Park, violin
Emily Shehi, violin
Bing Wang, violin
Melody Ye Yuan, violin
Weilu Zhang, violin
Dana Lawson, viola
Jenni Seo, viola
Minor L. Wetzel, viola
David Garrett, cello
Dahae Kim, cello
Zachary Mowitz, cello
Joanne Pearce Martin, piano

To read about the artists on tonight's program, please scan:

Yefim Bronfman

Yefim Bronfman, piano

WEDNESDAY
FEBRUARY 11, 2026 8PM

R. SCHUMANN *Arabeske* in C major, Op. 18 (c. 6 minutes)

BRAHMS Piano Sonata No. 3 in F minor, Op. 5
(c. 35 minutes)
- Allegro maestoso
- Andante: Andante espressivo—Andante molto
- Scherzo: Allegro energico
- Intermezzo (Rückblick): Andante molto
- Finale: Allegro moderato ma rubato

INTERMISSION

DEBUSSY *Images,* Book 2 (c. 13 minutes)
- Cloches à travers les feuilles
- Et la lune descend sur le temple qui fut
- Poissons d'or

BEETHOVEN Piano Sonata No. 23 in F minor, Op. 57,
"Appassionata" (c. 25 minutes)
- Allegro assai
- Andante con moto
- Allegro ma non troppo—Presto

Programs and artists subject to change.

This series is generously supported by the **Colburn Foundation**.

LA Phil
GUSTAVO DUDAMEL
MUSIC & ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

AT A GLANCE

Graceful arabesques, moonlit trysts, watery reflections, stormy seas—Robert Schumann, Johannes Brahms, Claude Debussy, and Ludwig van Beethoven attempted to capture these visions and their ineffable qualities on the keyboard. Schumann's *Arabeske* and Debussy's *Images* announce their inspiration in their titles; Brahms cited his literary sources for his Third Piano Sonata with lines of poetry buried in the margins of his music; and Beethoven's pupil and amanuensis Carl Czerny called the "Appassionata" Sonata a "great tonal painting." But unlike a painting or a book, music's ephemeral nature requires an interpreter to render these images in the moment. Tonight's extraordinary recitalist, Yefim Bronfman, realizes the task, painting with notes and allowing us to envision the composers' intended scenes.

ARABESKE IN C MAJOR, OP. 18

Robert Schumann
(1810–56)

Composed: 1839

The *Arabeske*, Op. 18, was written in early 1839, perhaps as an act of appeasement in a troubled time. Schumann's marriage to his beloved Clara would not take place for more than a year, and the couple was busy petitioning the courts for permission to marry over Clara's father's objection to the union.

During this time of courtship, Schumann's compositions had become more experimental and complex; their overt emotionalism and unconventional structures were baffling to average audiences and even controversial to experts. The C-major Fantasy, the Third Sonata (known as the "Concerto without Orchestra"), and *Kreisleriana* were all products of this fertile period. Clara, herself not yet 21 and already a famous virtuoso pianist, with a keen sense for what the future might hold for them should they become a couple, began suggesting simplifications and reconsiderations in his music to make them more salable.

As a result, Schumann published the *Arabeske* and *Blumenstück* (Flower Piece), as Opp. 18 and 19. Schumann was somewhat dismissive of the *Arabeske* and thought it "feeble," but this sounds like the grousing of an artist obliged to work under the dictates of finances rather than imagination. There is magic in this short work.

The title is informative: An Arabeske or arabesque is an ornament of figural, floral, or animal outlines inspired by Arab architecture and used to create intricate patterns. It is also a ballet position. In the work, a simple ambling tune makes three appearances, interrupted by two minor-key passages. The tune itself is unchanged in each occurrence, but notice how Schumann obliges us to reassess the figure, as though our view changes when seen through the differing shadows cast by the intervening passages.

—Grant Hiroshima

PIANO SONATA NO. 3 IN F MINOR, OP. 5

Johannes Brahms (1833–97)

Composed: 1853

Brahms composed his Third Piano Sonata in mid-to-late 1853, the months that saw him transformed from a gifted but unknown 19-year-old pianist to a 20-year-old star.

While touring with the flamboyant Hungarian violinist Eduard Reményi that spring, Brahms met Joseph Joachim, an entirely different sort of violinist whose sober musical ideals were akin to Brahms' own. In June Brahms and Reményi arrived in Weimar, where they met Liszt and his considerable band of followers. In a split that anticipated the battle lines forming in German music, Reményi joined Liszt's circle and stayed in Weimar, while Brahms left to spend July and August in Göttingen visiting Joachim, who would remain a lifelong friend and colleague. With an introduction from Joachim in hand, Brahms visited Robert Schumann in Düsseldorf at the end of September and made an immediate impression. On October 28, an article by Schumann in *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* appeared with the following proclamation: "...sooner or later...someone would and must appear, fated to give us the ideal expression of times, one who would not gain his mastery by gradual stages, but rather spring fully armed like Minerva from the head of Jove. And he has come, a young blood at whose cradle graces and heroes mounted guard. His name is Johannes Brahms...."

Schumann was the most important musical journalist in Germany, and his effusive testimonial flashed as bright a spotlight as could be shown on the grateful, if embarrassed, young composer. Overnight, the German musical establishment knew of "Schumann's young Messiah." In November Brahms went to Leipzig, where he had several works published by a major publishing house, and met Hector Berlioz, who was impressed with Brahms and his music. Berlioz wrote to Joachim: "I am grateful to you for having let me make the acquaintance of this diffident, audacious young man who has taken it into his head to make a new music. He will suffer greatly."

The sonata justifies Schumann's Olympian fanfare. It is a work of symphonic proportions and scope, bursting at the seams with ideas to the point that it needs an extra movement to explore different directions with material from earlier movements. It is Brahms' biggest solo piano work and his last piano sonata.

The first movement, with its tumultuous principal theme and serene secondary material, is typical of the sharp contrasts that would always mark Brahms' music, as would the complex, constantly shifting rhythms.

The Andante, containing moments of great melodic tenderness and climactic passion, is headed by a verse from a Bentzel-Sternau poem:

The evening dims
The moonlight shines
There are two hearts
That join in love
And embrace in rapture

While the second movement is a great flowering of melodies that are allowed time to run their course, the boisterous, bounding Scherzo is built around short phrases that are broken into even smaller fragments, with a striking sequence of kaleidoscopically shifting arpeggios and a middle section that moves in stately block chords.

The extra movement is the fourth, "Rückblick" (looking back). It looks back mainly on the slow movement, though there are elements from the other two, recast as a brooding meditation, remarkable in some places for its inexorable momentum and in others for a static use of sound and harmony that could be mistaken for Debussy.

The Finale is a rondo that has nearly everything in it, including a jaunty main theme, swelling lyrical melody, stately marches, and even a few moments of pianistic bravura. **—Howard Posner**

CONTINUED

IMAGES, BOOK 2

Claude Debussy (1862–1918)

Composed: 1907

In 1911, Claude Debussy wrote in a letter to composer Edgard Varèse (1883–1965): "I love pictures almost as much as music." This linking of his aural art to the graphic one calls to mind a similar connection made by Robert Schumann between music and a different creative discipline. In the mid-19th century, Schumann wrote: "The painter can learn from a symphony by Beethoven, just as the musician can learn from a work by [the great German writer] Goethe."

Debussy sought to paint pictures with tones, to create visions as yet unrecorded in music; and to the extent that his music evolved in a manner consonant with such a painter as Monet, it was inevitable that he become associated with the painterly movement called Impressionism. But Debussy rejected that term just as he recoiled at being dubbed a Symbolist. It was not so much that he disdained the terms Impressionism and Symbolism as it was his intense desire not to be categorized.

Debussy's contemporaries clearly recognized the musician's desire to be allied to the visual arts. His close friend René Peter said, "To judge by his works, and by their titles, he is a painter and that is what he wants to be. He calls his compositions pictures, sketches, prints, arabesques, masques, studies in black and white. Plainly it is his delight to paint in music." The painter Maurice Denis expressed it this way: "His music kindled strange resonances within us, awakened a need at the deepest level for a lyricism that only he could satisfy. What the Symbolist generation was searching for with such passion and anxiety—light, sonority, and color, the expression of the soul, and the frisson of mystery—was realized by him unerringly; almost, it seemed to us then, without effort. We perceived that here was something new."

Like an inspired chef, Debussy created a ravishing new pianistic menu by reshaping, reordering, and adding distinctly new flavorings to the ingredients at hand, namely a heritage passed down by Chopin and Liszt. In the area of harmony, he conjured East Asia by exploiting the whole-tone and pentatonic (five-note) scales, and he broke down the traditional system of key relationships. Further in his quest for originality, he abandoned classical forms almost completely and freed rhythm from confining strictures. With all of these methods, he created music that served as a sensuous suggestion of poetry, nature, and a myriad variety of moods and atmospheres. And he accomplished all of this with such originality that the 20th century's great innovator Igor Stravinsky said simply, "The musicians of my generation and myself owe the most to Debussy."

In 1905 Debussy began three sets of compositions depicting or conveying a variety of pictures—*Images*—one set of three pieces for orchestra and two sets with three pieces each for piano.

Cloches à travers les feuilles (Bells through the leaves)

Debussy first heard Javanese musicians at the Paris Universal Exposition, and the sounds of the gamelan stayed with him, surfacing in the allusions in this piece. The bells of the title are initiated in the first two measures by way of a whole-tone scale, from which the entire piece is constructed. The simplicity of this opening belies a complexity of intertwining parts that requires the music to be written

on three staves. A middle episode of pianistic brilliance contrasts strongly with the otherworldly sonorities of the first and last sections.

Et la lune descend sur le temple qui fut (And the moon sets over the temple that was)
Debussy dedicated this piece to his good friend and biographer Louis Laloy, an authority on Eastern and ancient Greek music. The poetic wording of the title, the fragmentary melodic structure, the pungent dissonances, and the almost floating nature of the sonorities confirm what Debussy referred to as the search by the Symbolists for "the inexpressible, which is the ideal of all art."

Poissons d'or (Goldfish)
This piece, along with "Reflections in the water" from Book 1, is probably the most frequently performed of the *Images*. And no wonder, since it is both brilliant and evocative. It is said that a painting of two gold-colored fish on a small Japanese lacquer panel that Debussy owned inspired this work. To suggest the darting movements of the tiny creatures, a pianist must at once master grace, elegance, and freedom of expression. **—Orrin Howard**

PIANO SONATA NO. 23 IN F MINOR, OP. 57, "APPASSIONATA"

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

Composed: c. 1804–06

Both the opening movement of the "Appassionata" Sonata in F minor, Op. 57, composed 1804–05, and its finale are in sonata form, and that tonal opposition is the principal dualism of the work. But Beethoven also plays powerfully with severe contrasts of dynamics, range, and articulation, and he is a master of expressive silences.

All of this is immediately apparent in the opening bars of the "Appassionata." (The nickname is not the composer's, but it accurately suggests the defining character of the piece.) It begins in ominous mystery, with a hushed traversal of the notes of the F-minor triad, full of latent energy and developmental potential while defining the tonic key as starkly as possible. There are suggestive silences, unexpected harmonic bumps, great sonic holes between the widely spread right and left hands, and a kinetic explosion at the end. You will recognize the recapitulation when all of this returns, but now it's presented over a throbbing bass line that fills in the expectant silences with audible urgency.

The central movement is a contemplative theme in D-flat major—a key much alluded to in the first movement—and increasingly agitated variations. It ends with an enriched reprise of the theme, leading directly into the whirlwind finale, a physically grueling dramatic challenge that raises the violence ante to bank-breaking levels in a furiously accelerated coda.

"If Beethoven, who was so fond of portraying scenes from nature, was perhaps thinking of ocean waves on a stormy night when from the distance a cry for help is heard, then such a picture will give the pianist a guide to the correct playing of this great tonal painting," wrote Beethoven's virtuoso pupil Carl Czerny about the finale of Op. 57. "There is no doubt that in many of his most beautiful works Beethoven was inspired by similar visions or pictures from his reading or from his own lively imagination. It is equally certain that if it were always possible to know the idea behind the composition, we would have the key to the music and its performance." **—John Henken**

YEFIM BRONFMAN

Internationally recognized as one of today's most acclaimed and admired pianists, Yefim Bronfman stands among a handful of artists regularly sought by festivals, orchestras, conductors, and recital series. His commanding technique, power, and exceptional lyrical gifts are consistently acknowledged by the press and audiences alike.

Following summer festival appearances in Vail, Tanglewood, and Aspen, the 2025/26 season began with an extensive recital and orchestral tour in Asia. In Europe, Bronfman performed with orchestras in London, Kristiansand, Paris, Berlin, Amsterdam, and Dresden and on tour with the Israel Philharmonic. He then performed in a special trio project with Anne-Sophie Mutter and Pablo Ferrández in Switzerland, Spain, Germany, and France. With orchestras in North America he returns to New York, Rochester, Cleveland (in Miami), Pittsburgh, Kansas City, and Montreal. In recital, Bronfman can be heard in Prague, Milan, Los Angeles, San Francisco, San Diego, Orange County, Charlottesville, and Toronto.

Bronfman works regularly with an illustrious group of conductors, including Daniel Barenboim, Herbert Blomstedt, Semyon Bychkov, Riccardo Chailly, Christoph von Dohnányi, Gustavo Dudamel, Charles Dutoit, Daniele Gatti, Valery Gergiev, Alan Gilbert, Vladimir Jurowski, Zubin Mehta, Riccardo Muti, Andris Nelsons, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Simon Rattle, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Jaap van Zweden, Franz Welser-Möst, and David Zinman. Summer engagements have regularly taken him to the major festivals of Europe and the US. Always keen to explore chamber music repertoire, he has performed with Pinchas Zukerman, Martha Argerich, Magdalena Kožená, Anne-Sophie Mutter, Emmanuel Pahud, and many others. In 1991 he gave a series of joint recitals with Isaac Stern in Russia, marking Bronfman's first public performances there since his emigration to Israel at age 15.

Widely praised for his solo, chamber, and orchestral recordings, Bronfman has received seven Grammy nominations, winning in 1997 with Esa-Pekka Salonen and the Los Angeles Philharmonic for their recording of the three Bartók Piano Concertos. His prolific catalog of recordings includes works for two pianos by Rachmaninoff and Brahms with Emanuel Ax, the complete Prokofiev concertos with the Israel Philharmonic and Zubin Mehta, a Schubert/Mozart disc with the Zukerman Chamber Players, and the soundtrack to Disney's *Fantasia 2000*.

Born in Tashkent in the Soviet Union, Yefim Bronfman immigrated to Israel with his family in 1973, studying with pianist Arie Vardi, head of the Rubin Academy of Music at Tel Aviv University. In the United States, he studied at The Juilliard School, Marlboro School of Music, and the Curtis Institute of Music under Rudolf Firkušný, Leon Fleisher, and Rudolf Serkin. The 1991 recipient of the prestigious Avery Fisher Prize, one of the highest honors given to American instrumentalists, Bronfman was further honored in 2010 as the recipient of the Jean Gimbel Lane prize in piano performance from Northwestern University and in 2015 with an honorary doctorate from the Manhattan School of Music.

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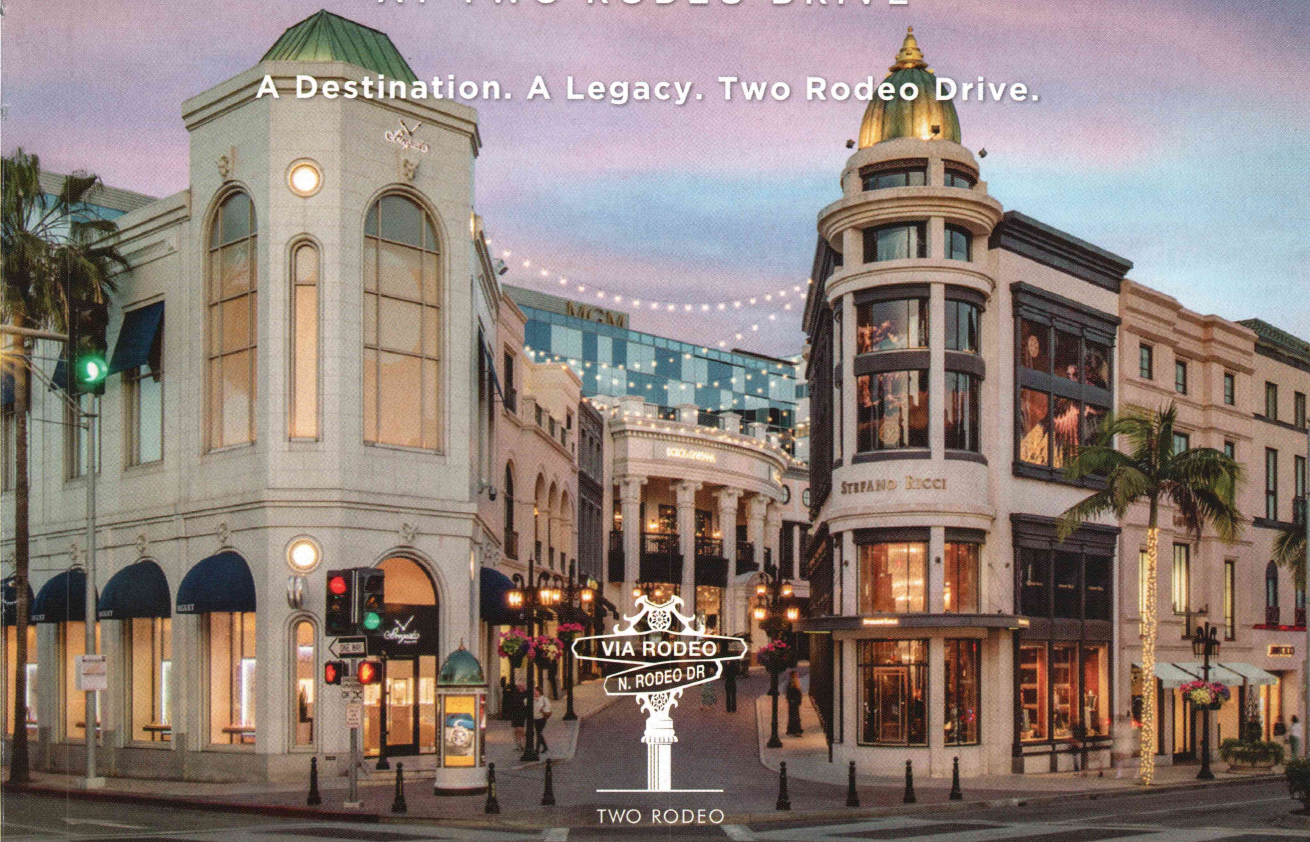

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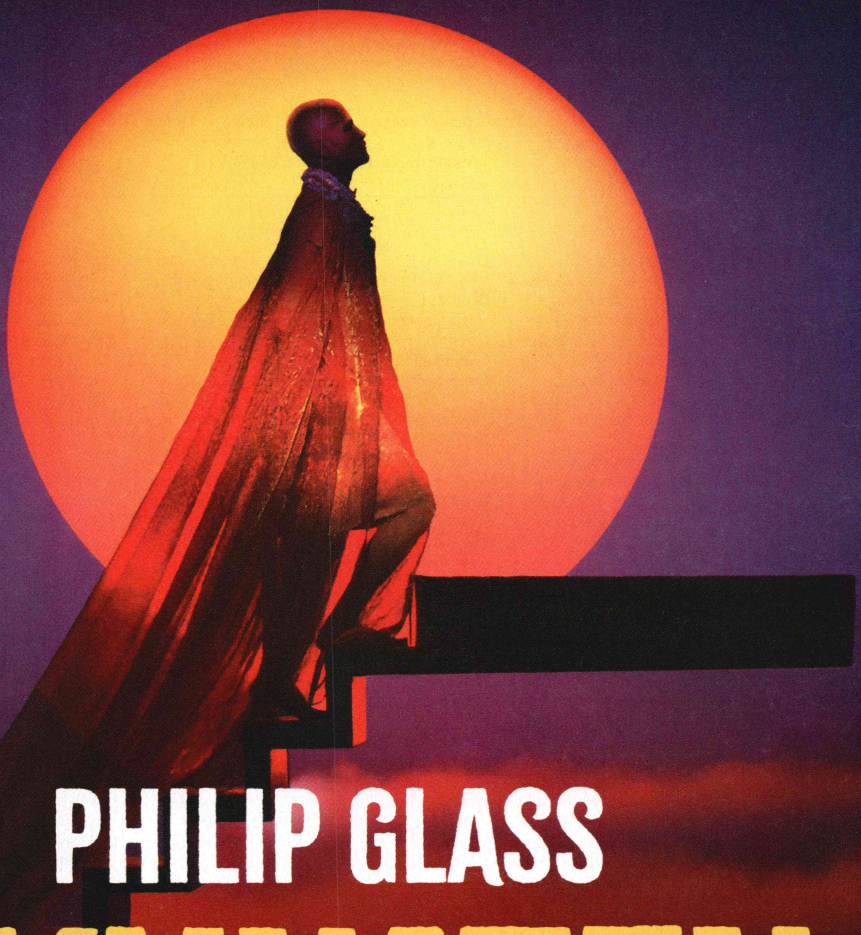

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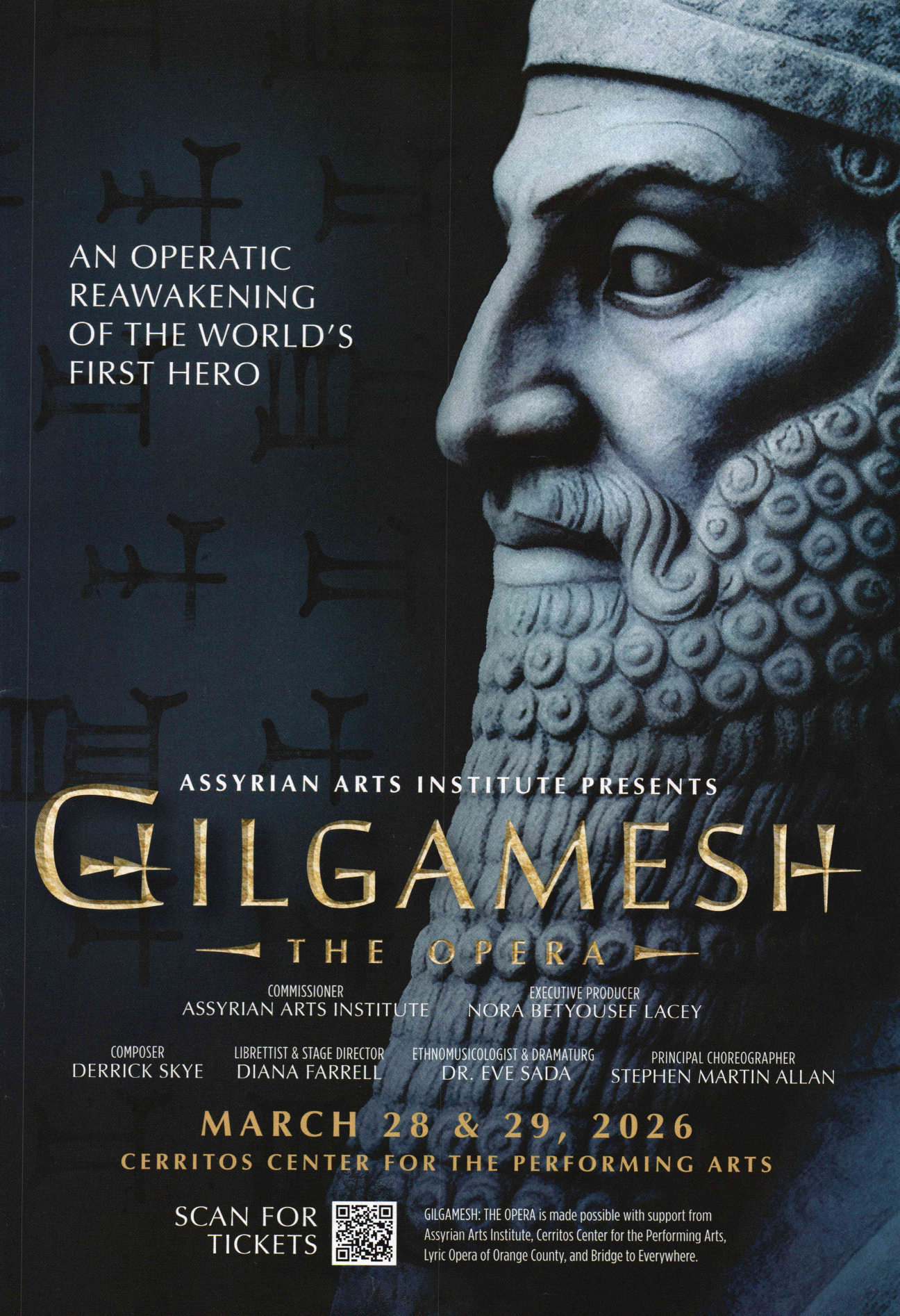
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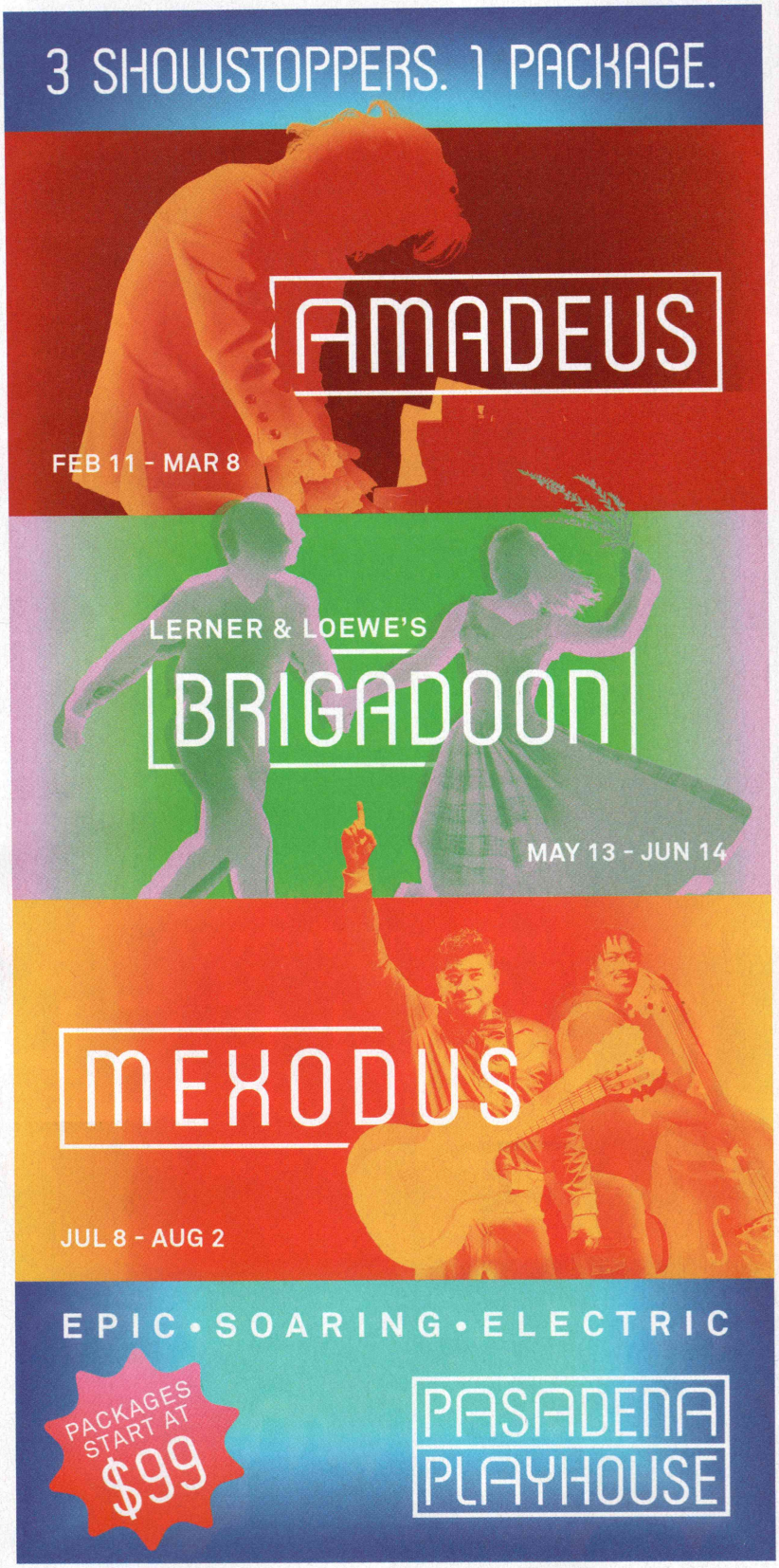

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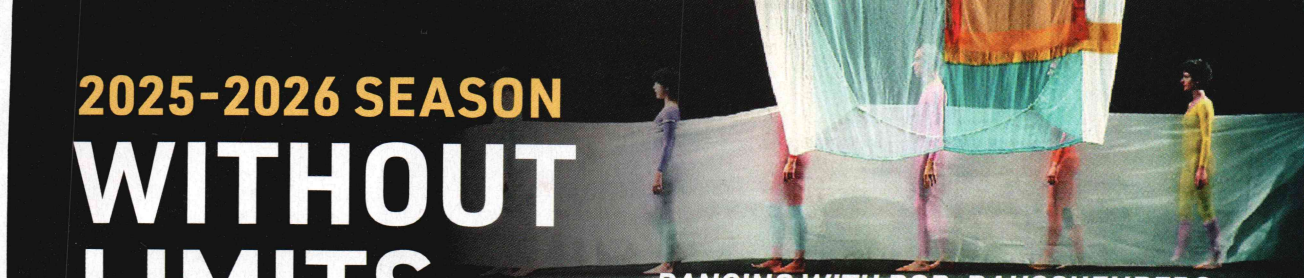

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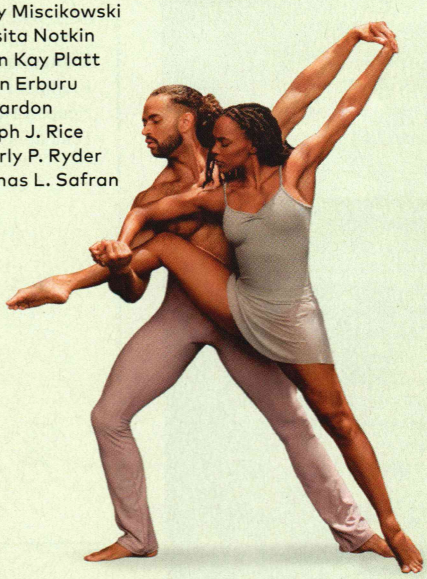

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater's James Gilmer and Samantha Figgins. Photo by Andrew Eccles.

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(From left to right)

Photo Credit: David Franco, Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors Photographer.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

As a steward of The Music Center of Los Angeles County, we recognize that we occupy land originally and still inhabited and cared for by the Tongva, Tataviam, Serrano, Kizh and Chumash Peoples. We honor and pay respect to their elders and descendants—past, present and emerging—as they continue their stewardship of these lands and waters. We acknowledge that settler colonization resulted in land seizure, disease, subjugation, slavery, relocation, broken promises, genocide and multigenerational trauma. This acknowledgment demonstrates our responsibility and commitment to truth, healing and reconciliation and to elevating the stories, culture and community of the original inhabitants of Los Angeles County.

We are grateful to have the opportunity to live and work on these ancestral lands. We are dedicated to growing and sustaining relationships with Native peoples and local tribal governments, including (in no particular order) the:

- Fernandeño Tataviam Band of Mission Indians
- Gabrielino Tongva Indians of California Tribal Council
- Gabrieleno/Tongva San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians
- Gabrieleño Band of Mission Indians-Kizh Nation
- San Manuel Band of Mission Indians
- San Fernando Band of Mission Indians

To learn more about the First Peoples of Los Angeles County, please visit the Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission website at lanaic.lacounty.go

Happening at The Music Center

FEBRUARY 2026

SUN 1 FEB / 2:00 p.m.
Mahler, Bartók & Ravel
LA PHIL
@ Walt Disney Concert Hall

SUN 1 FEB / 7:00 p.m.
Common Ground: The Music of Górecki and Jeff Beal
LOS ANGELES MASTER CHORALE
@ Walt Disney Concert Hall

TUE 3 FEB / 8:00 p.m.
Adams, Cheung & Lanao
LA PHIL
@ Walt Disney Concert Hall

FRI 6 FEB / 8:00 p.m.
Thomas Adès and Yuja Wang Featuring Prokofiev and Tchaikovsky
LA PHIL
@ Walt Disney Concert Hall
Thru 2/8/2026

SUN 8 FEB / 7:30 p.m.
Thomas Ospital
LA PHIL
@ Walt Disney Concert Hall

TUE 10 FEB / 7:30 p.m.
Juan Diego Flórez in Recital
LA OPERA
@ Dorothy Chandler Pavilion

TUE 10 FEB / 8:00 p.m.
Lunar New Year—Chamber Music
LA PHIL
@ Walt Disney Concert Hall

Visit **musiccenter.org** for additional information on all upcoming events.

@musiccenterla

WED 11 FEB / 7:30 p.m.
Here Lies Love
CENTER THEATRE GROUP
@ Mark Taper Forum
Thru 3/22/2026

WED 11 FEB / 8:00 p.m.
Yefim Bronfman—Colburn Celebrity Recital
LA PHIL
@ Walt Disney Concert Hall

THU 12 FEB / 8:00 p.m.
Dudamel Conducts Beethoven and Lorenz featuring Yunchan Lim and Cate Blanchett
LA PHIL
@ Walt Disney Concert Hall
Thru 2/15/2026

SAT 14 FEB / 3:00 p.m.
Gloria Molina Grand Park's Love Notes
GLORIA MOLINA GRAND PARK
@ Gloria Molina Grand Park

TUE 17 FEB / 8:00 p.m.
Seth MacFarlane
LA PHIL
@ Walt Disney Concert Hall

FRI 20 FEB / 8:00 p.m.
Gustavo Conducts Beethoven: *Missa Solemnis*
LA PHIL
@ Walt Disney Concert Hall
Thru 2/22/2026

SAT 21 FEB / 7:30 p.m.
Patti LuPone in Concert
LA OPERA
@ Dorothy Chandler Pavilion

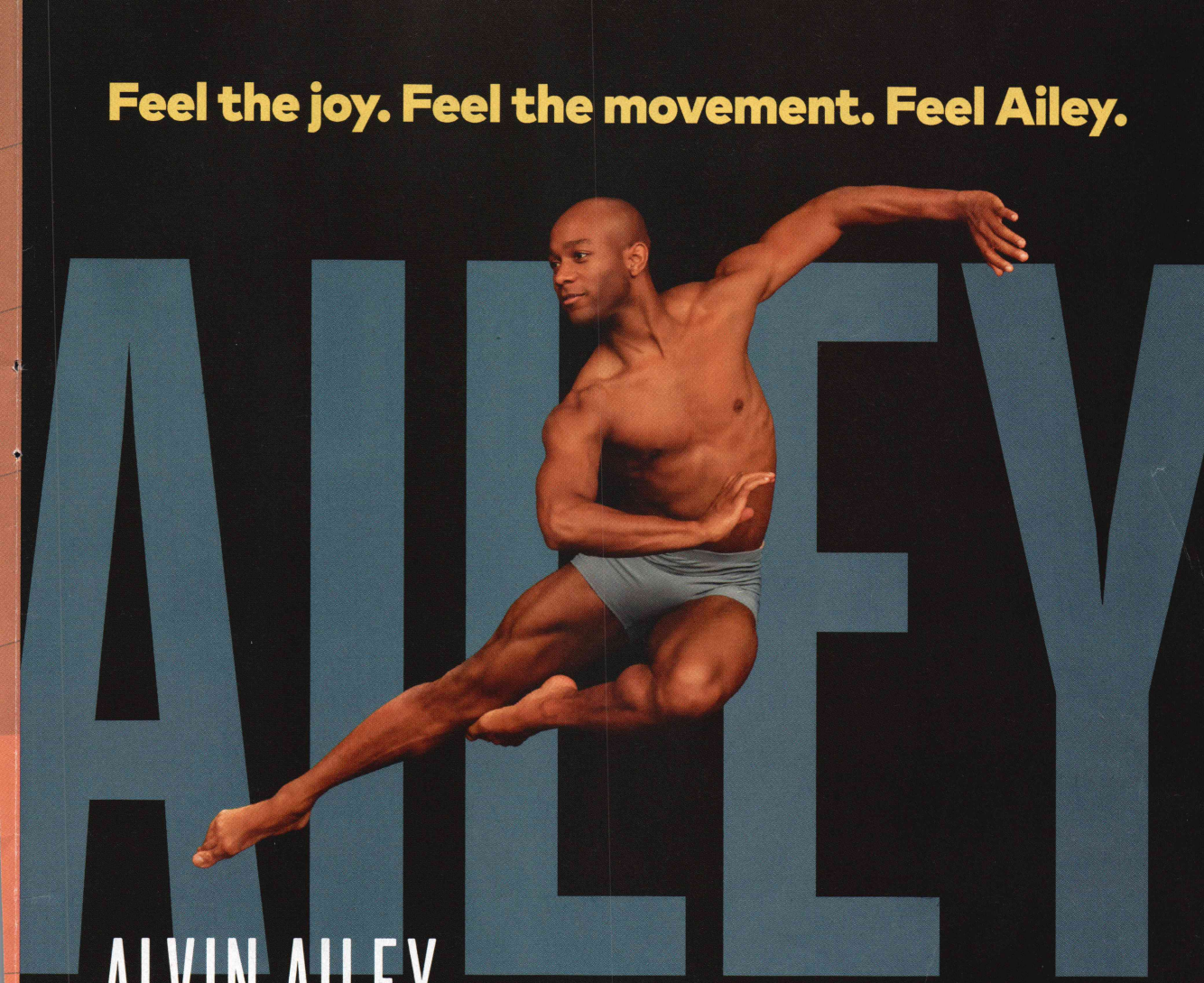
THU 26 FEB / 8:00 p.m.
Beethoven and Ortiz with Dudamel
LA PHIL
@ Walt Disney Concert Hall
Thru 3/1/2026

SAT 28 FEB / 7:30 p.m.
Akhnaten
LA OPERA
@ Dorothy Chandler Pavilion
Thru 3/22/2026

SCAN TO VIEW FULL CALENDAR

Photo by Will Yang for The Music Center.

Feel the joy. Feel the movement. Feel Ailey.



ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER

March 25–29, 2026

This groundbreaking company embodies African American strength and resilience through mixed repertory programs featuring beloved classics and new works, including Alvin Ailey's soul-stirring *Revelations*.

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The Music Center's Dorothy Chandler Pavilion
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GLORYA KAUFMAN PRESENTS DANCE AT THE MUSIC CENTER

A TMC Arts Program

2025/2026 Season Dedicated to the Memory of Glorya Kaufman

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater's Xavier Mack. Photo by Andrew Eccles.

NEW YORK CITY BALLET

June 24–28, 2026

A once-in-lifetime experience! Don't miss New York City Ballet in its return to The Music Center after a 20-year absence. Experience two electrifying programs and the company's extraordinary dancers with works by George Balanchine, Jerome Robbins, Justin Peck, Tiler Peck, Christopher Wheeldon and more, accompanied by the New York City Ballet Orchestra.

SCAN FOR TICKETS!

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GLORYA KAUFMAN PRESENTS DANCE AT THE MUSIC CENTER

A TMC Arts Program

2025/2026 Season Dedicated to the Memory of Glorya Kaufman

Photo by Erin Baiano.

BROADWAY IN HOLLYWOOD

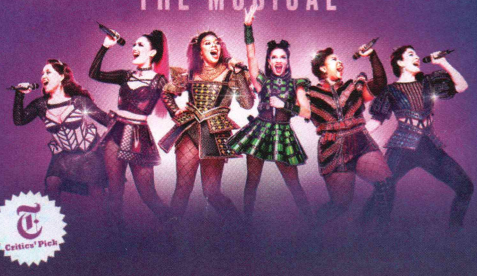
2025-26 SEASON

BROADWAY'S "EUPHORIC CELEBRATION!"

Entertainment

SIX

THE MUSICAL



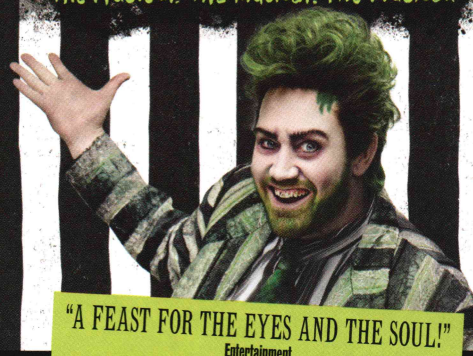
Critics' Pick

FEBRUARY 18 - MARCH 8

IT'S SHOWTIME!

BEETLE JUICE

The Musical. The Musical. The Musical.



"A FEAST FOR THE EYES AND THE SOUL!"

Entertainment

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MARCH 10-22

THE TONY WINNING BEST MUSICAL IS BACK!

MONTY PYTHON'S SPAMALOT™

MARCH 24 - APRIL 12

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